



AZ Institute of Footcare

Radiofrequency Technology Helps Get Foot Pain Sufferers Back on Their Feet.

As more and more people of all ages take up activities such as tennis, golf and strenuous walking to improve their health, their feet may suffer as a result. In fact, heel pain, specifically, is one of the most commonly reported complaints among patients visiting podiatrists today - with more than 20 million Americans suffering from the condition.

Most heel pain sufferers complain that their heel hurts when they first get out of bed in the morning. After walking a bit, the pain eases, but returns after inactivity. A tightening or inflammation of the plantar fascia, which is the band of tissue below the heel bone, causes this condition. This results in the plantar fascia rubbing against the bottom of the heel, and creates pain. Walking or stretching helps to relax the tissue, which is why the pain may decrease. Heel pain usually responds to conservative treatment involving medication, physical therapy and custom-made orthotics to help correct imbalances in your feet when you walk which may aggravate heel pain. Traditionally, if more treatment becomes necessary, the patient would receive invasive surgery that involves cutting or severing the fascia.

That is, until recently. Dr. Kerry Zang, of Arizona Institute of Footcare Physicians, has introduced a new radiofrequency-based technology called coblation therapy to the Phoenix area. "It is different from prior procedures as it is minimally invasive, takes minutes to perform, and most importantly, preserves the plantar fascia, thereby maintaining the biomechanics of the foot," says Dr. Zang. Rather than "cut," Zang utilizes a device called the Topaz Microdebrider, which several of his patients refer to as "the magic wand," due to its shape and the fact that it yields such speedy results. For most patients, the Topaz wand offers dramatic relief from nagging, sometimes disabling foot problems. The procedure is done at an out-patient facility,

involves a small incision that requires only a stitch and is covered by most insurance plans.

The Topaz wand enables surgeons to treat soft tissue, such as tendons in the knee, shoulder and elbow, and in the case of Dr. Zang's patients, the ankle and foot. It operates at a lower temperature, allowing for more precise procedures. In short, the Topaz procedure provides patients with a treatment option that is less invasive and less traumatic. Largely considered the gold standard, coblation technology is now utilized in more than 10,000 operating rooms and has been used in the treatment of over 3 million patients worldwide. Dr. Zang and his colleagues are pioneering the latest applications for Topaz technology used in the treatment of heel pain and other foot-related ailments. "One of the great features of this technology is that it allows us to target and destroy the bad cells while not harming the good cells around them," says Dr. Zang. "This stimulates the formation of new blood vessels, which come into the area and initiates a healing response."

Carol Blank, a Phoenix-based office manager, says it was the right treatment for her. "The tendon in my foot was causing me tremendous pain," she explains. "It had gotten to the point where just walking around my home or office was unbearable. It's truly a debilitating condition in that it takes you off your feet, literally. I wanted to have the problem taken care of, but I was wary of open surgery, which I was told would have me in a cast potentially for months. Dr. Zang told me about the new Topaz technology and let me know that I was a candidate for it. It was a natural decision to make. My recovery was speedy and more than two years out, I have no recurrence of foot pain." For more information about Topaz technology, contact Arizona Institute of Footcare Physicians at 480-834-8804. **MD**