

"Patients in recovery can do a lot more than many give them credit for. I raise the bar, take off the handcuffs and they rise to the occasion."

— Doc Mark's 



My inspiration to become a doctor in my field was: My love of life and sports-and knowing that there was a better way for the two to coexist if the right approach to the inevitable injuries that occur from active living could be found.

The Doctor is In: The Sanders Clinic for Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine in Houston, where we offer a whole-body program addressing both the nutritional and physical deficiencies to ensure a stronger outcome for non-surgical, pre-surgical and post surgical patients alike.

I witness true miracles when my patients: Recognize that they're stronger than they thought and work through the pain, which is sometimes excruciating in reconditioning their injured limb, to get back to the sport they love.

My grandmother's surefire old-fashioned remedy that I still prescribe is: "Get off your "a - -" and get moving!"

When I need Rx for body and soul: I rip through the track on my CRF 250 and see if I can keep up with some of my younger patients or I survive Baldy's double black diamonds in Sun Valley.

My hopes and dreams for the future of Texan's Healthcare are: That they take care of their whole being -in physical fitness and nutrition-and work forcefully back to health following an injury by moving, moving, moving. Nothing is gained from complacency or immobilization of an injured limb.

Gets Injured Athletes Back In the Game Fast Uses Wisdom Over Technology to Avoid Unnecessary Surgeries Successfully Salvages Previously Failed ACL Surgeries, Restoring Quality of Life and Returning Former Athletes to Their Sport

Getting Back on the Bike



A Heartwarming Texas Tale as Told by Doc Sanders

I have been athletic and loved sports my entire life. Finding the most healthful way back from the inevitable injuries that come with such an active life motivated me through medical school, research into effective strengthening programs, twenty years of orthopaedic practice and eventually my own orthopaedic surgery and sports medicine clinic.

I love what I do.

There was one case in particular that most impacted me and confirmed that my unconventional approach to surgery was necessary for athletes who didn't want a serious injury, such as ACL damage, to permanently bench them.

I was at the track one day for a ride and saw a motocross instructor moving around with a pronounced limp. I asked him what was wrong with his leg and he said that he was once a professional rider until his knee finally took him out after one too many accidents and unsuccessful surgeries. Unfortunately, this young rider had had several ACL reconstructions using Allograft tendons (taken from cadaver tissue) and as these procedures failed he had spent months in a long leg cast-preventing any type of movement. Such tendons are not strong enough for the athletes, which is why I never use them and continue to repair those previously done this way.

My work with athletes has shown that autografts taken from the patella tendon of the healthy leg has greater success than either allografts or hamstring tendons from the same injured leg. It drastically reduces recovery time, because the injured leg shares the trauma of the procedure with its healthy leg and both heal quickly. This type of autograft not only adheres better to the bone than a hamstring tendon, but also poses fewer risks than an allograft because it is not viewed by the body as "foreign" and it is live rather than dead!

DR. MARK SANDERS

Sanders Clinic for Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine  Houston, Texas

My young rider's previous failed surgeries, combined with ineffective rehabilitation practices, left him with a large flexion contracture and a severe limp-sidelining him permanently. Not only could he no longer ride, his self confidence was shaken by the reaction he often got from some of his young students regarding his limp. He stood six foot two inches on the normal side, and five foot ten inches on the injured side because he couldn't straighten out his knee. He had lost the energy and enthusiasm that affects everything you do.

"I'll always remember how this stout, strong athlete welled up with tears when he saw his leg extended fully for the first time in years. 'Sure, that's great,' I agreed. 'But we aren't done until I can race you around the track,' I told him."

I told him it didn't have to be this way and that he could have a better life.

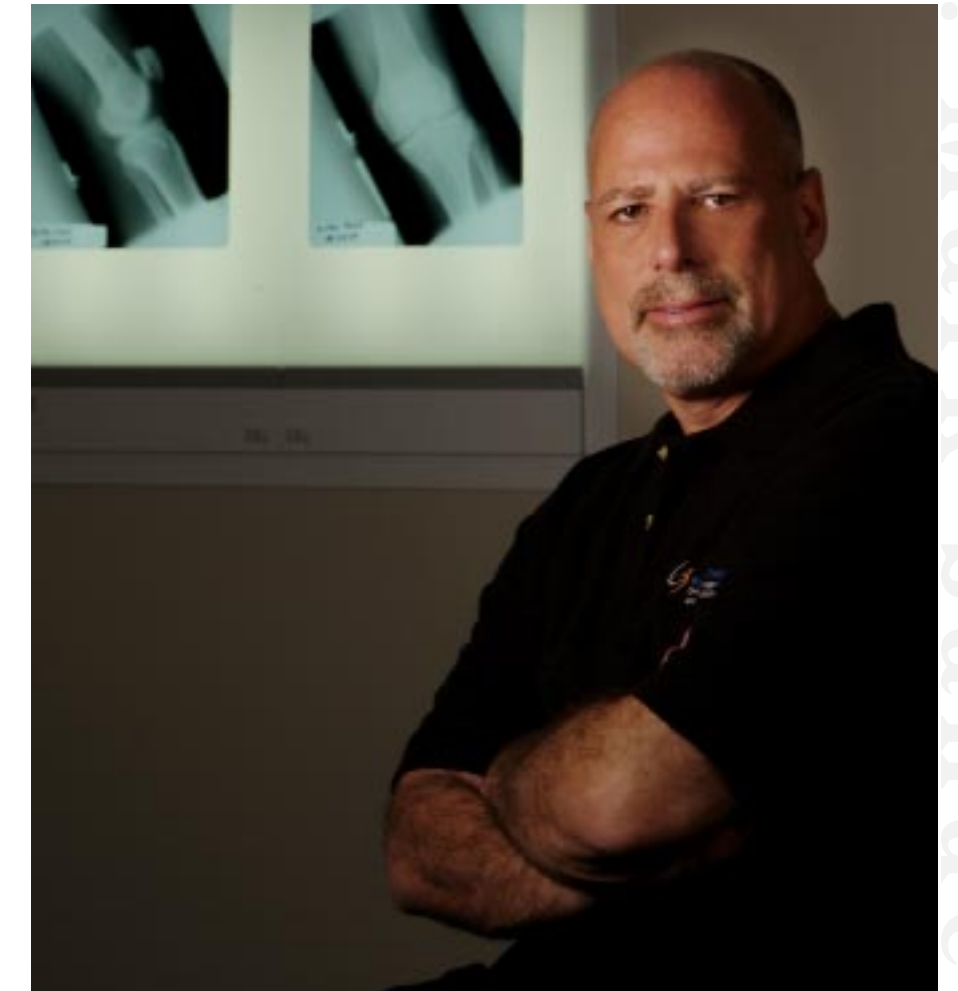
When this young man came to see me, he was convinced that a total knee replacement was his last chance for normal movement. I told him that was not the solution, but that a stronger leg was there if he was willing to work for it and set his expectations higher.

Following a reconditioning program to strengthen the leg as much as we could in its condition, we arthroscopically removed scar tissue and released abnormal adhesions between the moving parts in the knee. We achieved full knee extension in surgery.

I'll always remember how this stout, strong athlete welled up with tears when he saw his leg extended fully for the first time in years. He said that he never believed he would be able to walk again without a limp. And as touched as I was by that, I still wanted to see him back on his bike and riding as he did before. "Sure, that's great," I agreed. "But we aren't done until I can race you around the track," I told him.

He just smiled.

Over the weeks that followed, I watched him work through some of the most



rigorous reconditioning of his life, but he never wavered.

Before he headed home, this young athlete, who once stood at 5'10" on one side and 6' 2" on the other, walked completely upright and with full range of motion down the hospital corridor, very tall . . . and very proud. But most notable was the look on his face when he reclaimed control over his leg, his sport and his life.

His commitment to our accelerated rehabilitation program paid off when he hopped on his bike in two months and started to race again. This young rider has become a good friend and still chokes up every time he talks about how this surgery impacted his life. 