



# GET A MOVE ON

DR. MARK S. SANDERS PURSUES OUTCOME OVER INCOME AT THE  
**SANDERS CLINIC FOR ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AND SPORTS MEDICINE**

By: **JODY JOSEPH MARMEL** | Photography: **JUSTIN CALHOUN**

**M**ark S. Sanders, M.D. F.A.C.S., is a New York native who has called Houston his home for decades. He moved to Houston when family members and longtime Houstonians said this city was the place for him. And they were absolutely right.

Dr. Sanders opened the Sanders Clinic for Orthopaedic Surgery and Sports Medicine in 1986. And it is today highly sought by athletes and those suffering from skeletal malalignment and other musculoskeletal disorders from throughout the United States and abroad. Dr. Sanders is Board Certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery and holds a subspecialty certificate in Orthopaedic Sports Medicine. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American College of Surgeons. He is also a published author and member of esteemed professional societies, accomplishments which punctuate the Sanders Clinic story but hardly tell it all.

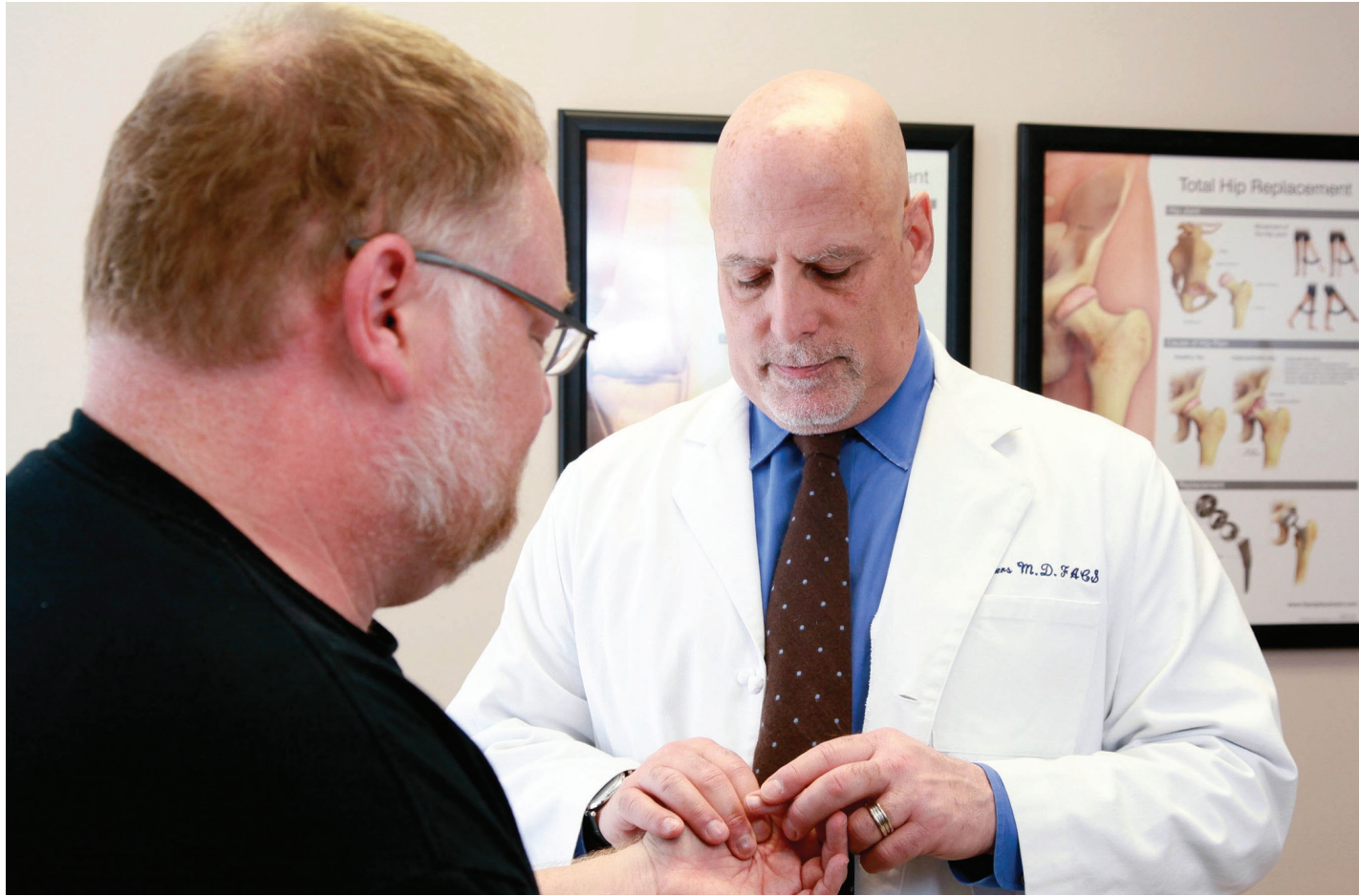
During his 33 year career in orthopedics, Dr. Sanders has performed thousands of arthroscopic surgeries on severe shoulder, knee, and ankle injuries, corrected misdiagnosed and improperly treated deformities, and prevented ulcerations and amputations by proactively correcting predisposing conditions of the diabetic foot and ankle.

Though despite his vast surgical experience, he is one of the few Orthopaedic surgeons in Houston to champion a healthy, non-surgical nutritional and reconditioning program for common musculoskeletal injuries and conditions that combines licensed therapists, a whole-body wellness plan and home activities that easily translate into a patient's everyday life for sustaining results. His "holistic" approach has proven to be a successful combination in today's health and activity-conscious society wanting to age stronger and retain independence longer.

While Dr. Sanders has a ferocious appetite for research and evidence based outcomes (most recently publishing "Knee Injuries and the Use of Prophylactic Knee Bracing in Off-road Motorcycling: Results of a Large-Scale Epidemiological Study" in The American Journal of Sports Medicine), many of his patients know him best as the "motocross doc" - a title he earned while working closely with professional and amateur extreme sports athletes in the '90s.

He was a recreational rider himself and remains today an avid sportsman - a lifestyle that has cultivated a true understanding of the need of the athlete and active population to get back to the things they enjoy doing as quickly as possible. Dr. Sanders coined the term "The Fastest Way Back," which has become a tagline synonymous with the Sanders Clinic.





## A HOLISTIC AND PERSONALIZED APPROACH

Dr. Sanders strongly believes in the restorative properties of the human body and takes a conservative, holistic approach to the injuries and conditions he sees. He addresses nutrition, exercise and lifestyle to facilitate recovery and restore overall well-being in the least obtrusive way possible.

"I reserve surgery for more serious injuries and conditions that do not respond to a conservative treatment plan - and work closely with my patients preoperatively to ensure they go into surgery in the best physical health possible when surgery is indicated - to achieve the best outcome possible," explains Dr. Sanders.

His patients range in age, activity level and socioeconomic status. They all, though, come to him for the same reason, to get the right diagnosis and recommendation for treatment options offering long-term, successful and sustaining results.

Viewing medicine and surgery as "art," Dr. Sanders considers himself to be a master craftsman of musculoskeletal health. He has either designed or purchased his own tools for some procedures, rather than "relying on what today's income-oriented and cash strapped hospitals will provide or for which insurers will pay." And he prides himself and the Sanders Clinic staff on the personalized level of care they are able to provide every, single patient.

"Our patients are not lost in the impersonal, process oriented working of a large hospital system. We know them. We know their family members standing

by their side through treatment. We know the marathon they're working towards and their dream to walk through the entire Disney World park with their grandkids without stopping to rest because of hip, knee or foot pain," said Dr. Sanders.

"Their goals become our goals. We remain in touch with many of our patients, who send emails and photos of their latest accomplishment and things they're able to do now. That really makes it all worthwhile. I want to help them get back out there as badly as they

want to be back out there. I don't want their life to revolve around visits to the doctor's office. My focus is on the 'health' part of healthcare" added Dr. Sanders.

But that is not the only aspect of Dr. Sanders' practice setting him apart. His proactive approach in addressing the musculoskeletal impact that some chronic diseases, such as diabetes, have on a growing portion of our population today is an amazing leap in the medical arena.

## PROACTIVELY CHANGING OUTCOMES ... ONE PATIENT AT A TIME

As reports continue to spotlight our next generation on the fast track to a diabetes diagnosis - experiencing as a result of an earlier diagnosis more of its harsh impact resulting in shorter lives - Dr. Sanders has launched a diabetic foot and ankle educational initiative.

This initiative is part of his proactive approach and entails partnering with primary care, family practitioners, internists and diabetes health clinics. It is designed to foster an understanding of simple signs - identified with a physical examination - that can determine a patient's predisposition to devastating foot and ankle problems responsible for accelerating a diabetic patient's overall health decline.

Dr. Sanders is the only orthopedic surgeon in Houston working "proactively" to help diabetic patients avoid the inevitable outcome of limb and life threatening amputations. "Most podiatrists and orthopedic physicians today are working to 'react' to the prob-

lem, addressing each as they arise in a 'crisis management' capacity," said Dr. Sanders.

"Applying the wisdom of research findings, scientific data, we advocate addressing early signs of a gastrocnemius contracture, which is basically identified with a simple in office examination of dorsiflexion that a primary care or family medicine physician can perform. "Identifying this early allows us to improve the diabetic patient's 'foot loading' - the main contributor to diabetic foot ulceration leading to poor wound healing, subsequent fractures and rapid decline of limb and life," he added.

Dr. Sanders explains that this simple dorsiflexion test and proper response to a patients inability to adequately dorsiflex can reduce the number of more serious foot and ankle problems he sees as an orthopedic specialists, including metatarsalgia, forefoot ulceration, hallux valgus, flatfoot deformity, Achilles tendinitis, plantar fasciitis and Charcot arthropathy."

In the diabetic patient, this early identification allows him to develop a proactive healthcare plan, preventing serious foot and ankle problems associated with diabetes. By doing this he and his staff believe the medical community can work together in reducing the number of lower extremity amputations associated with diabetes and ensure long, active lives for this population.

"No one in orthopedics right now, to our surprise, is approaching it in this way. They are dealing with wound care and severe fractures by the time they see the patients - often resulting in lower limb amputations and the issues that go with that. It is compelling," said Dr. Sanders.

## USING WISDOM OVER TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

Dr. Sanders is certainly on the forefront of orthopedic medicine and offers brilliant insight and invaluable educational resources for all doctors. He also offers an Accelerated Sports Injury Rehabilitation Program and a Reconditioning Program for his patients. The core of these programs is movement. In overcoming an injury and staying strong, Dr. Sanders' tells patients and non-patients alike "you can do more than you think."

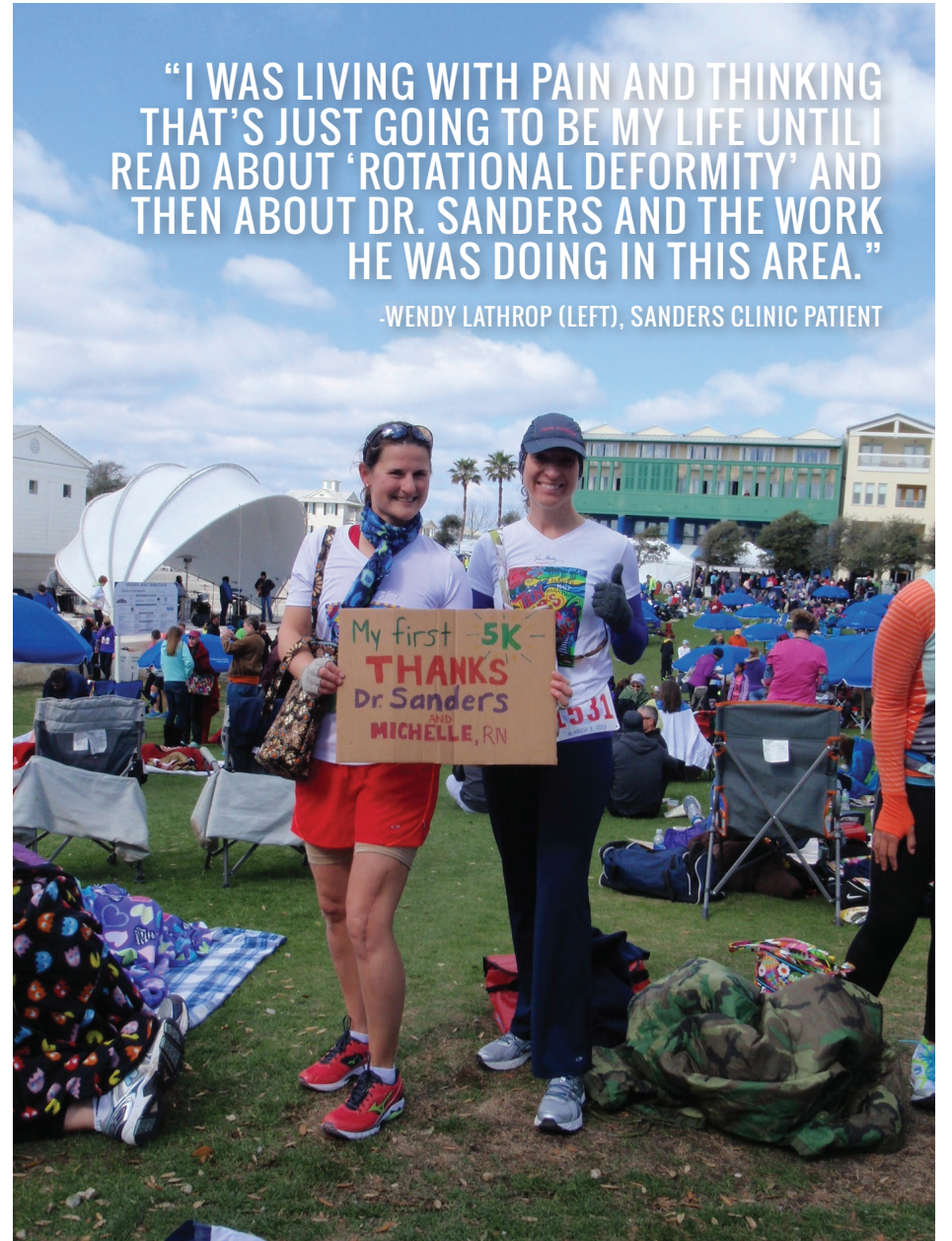
If either program is used in lieu of surgery, it may focus on strengthening opposing muscle groups and retraining a patient to perform an activity in a way that reduces stress on the injured area. This program is also used to strengthen the injured limb and overall body in preparation for a procedure, which has proven to produce better outcomes. It is also used to quickly get patients moving again postoperatively to avoid onset of stiffness-which if allowed to happen in some cases can be irreversible. It has both short-term and long-term goals.

In the short-term, it is designed to encourage ongoing use/strengthening of the injured limb rather than allowing patients to favor the stronger areas and shift overall musculoskeletal balance. The long-term goal is to show patients how strong their body actually is and to carry the rehab exercises home and to the gym, incorporating it into everyday life to avoid recurrence.

"There is a big psychological aspect to overcoming an injury. Many patients question the injured limb's ability to return to normal or the same level of activity they had before the injury," said Ed Nepveux, Sanders Clinic physical therapist.

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"We keep the injured limb moving and instill in patients confidence in its ability to restrengthen and resume full function," added Nepveux.

Sanders Clinic Patients Talk

"I was living with pain and thinking that's just going to be my life until I read about 'rotational deformity' and then about Dr. Sanders and the work he was doing in this area," said Wendy Lathrop, a rotational deformity patient of Dr. Sanders. "Now I'm planning to run a 5K this weekend and living like I never thought I would," she added.

Michael Smalley, another Sanders Clinic patient added, "Before my hip replacement, my kids were helping to put on my socks and shoes. Now, I'm racing my son to the car. He restored my life with my wife and kids. I don't think I'm a fluke but rather a walking testament to what that man does."

Dr. Sanders underscores addressing the overall patient, as he believes that rarely is a problem with a

limb or joint isolated. The musculoskeletal system is interconnected and the ability to look at it completely is key.

Preventing inappropriate surgical intervention and addressing the source of the problem by understanding what is going on throughout has proven to be one of the many components of Dr. Sanders' success. Virtually every patient leaves his office confident that if anyone can figure out their problem and "fix it," it is Dr. Sanders without a doubt.

"If we can keep you moving, we can prolong your life," added Dr. Sanders.

*For more information, Sanders Clinic for Orthopaedic Surgery and Sports Medicine is located at The River Oaks Tower, 4126 Southwest Freeway, Suite 1750, Houston, Texas, 77027. Please visit [www.sandersclinic.net](http://www.sandersclinic.net), or call 888-530-4494.*