

Best Foot Forward

Enjoying a glass of iced tea in his kitchen, Kevin misjudged the counter height and broke the glass, sending a razor-sharp shard into his left foot. The jagged glass lacerated a tendon, covering the floor of his Alexandria home with blood. When emergency room doctors discovered Kevin couldn't move one of his toes, the diagnosis was clear: he had severed his extensor tendon and would need surgery to repair it immediately.

Kevin, 51, consulted Commonwealth Orthopaedics surgeon Kevin Lutta, MD, who specializes in foot and ankle procedures. "I was apprehensive because I had done enough research to know that tendon reattachment is tricky and I wanted an experienced surgeon to perform the operation," Kevin recalls. "Dr. Lutta put me at ease right away. He had a great disposition and reassured me that he had done this type of surgery many times before."

Treatment of extensor tendon injuries varies depending on whether the injury is a laceration, like Kevin's, or a rupture. The first step is a careful physical examination to evaluate the specific extensor tendon involved, especially in lacerations where multiple tendons and other structures such as nerves and blood vessels may be damaged as well. These, too, may need to be repaired.

Commonwealth Orthopaedics' experienced surgeons offer the most advanced repair techniques available. "Extensor tendons in the foot are relatively superficial and easily lacerated with trauma," Dr. Lutta explains. "In these cases, surgery is the best treatment option. The goal is to restore extension function to the lesser toes. It has been shown that when the extensor tendons are transected and not repaired, a claw toe deformity

develops. Patients with chronic untreated extensor tendon lacerations have difficulty controlling the toes when attempting to put on socks or shoes; the toe tends to catch on them."

Dr. Lutta performed Kevin's tendon repair four days after the initial injury. Despite the large open wound and risk of the tendon ends retracting, potentially making repair difficult, the surgery was a success. Kevin spent a week on crutches with a soft cast and then had a walking boot put on so he could return to work and basic activities. After a month, he came back to Commonwealth for physical therapy, which he continued on his own at home. His pain was minimal, his recovery rapid, and he has since returned to all the things he loves – golfing, biking, and working out in the gym.

"I feel great and I'm very pleased with the care I received at Commonwealth Orthopaedics," he says. "I wholeheartedly recommend the entire team, especially Dr. Lutta. He's a pro who does a tremendous job and I'm a living, breathing – and walking – example of that."



Kevin Lutta, MD graduated with a BA in Biology from Clark University. He earned his medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine, where he was named to Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society. He completed his residency in orthopaedic surgery at Howard University Hospital and went on to a fellowship in foot and ankle reconstruction at Pennsylvania Hospital, part of the University of Pennsylvania Health System.

For full biographies and a complete directory of the physicians at Commonwealth Orthopaedics who perform these and other procedures visit our website at www.c-o-r.com.



After severing his extensor tendon in his foot, Kevin had surgery to reattach the tendon and recovered rapidly so he can enjoy his golf game again.

Kevin – Alexandria
Lacerated Extensor Tendon Repair