

Off the Sidelines

Shoulder Labrum Repair Restores High Velocity Lifestyle

Arriving late for her championship volleyball tournament, Nadine skipped her usual warm up and headed straight for the court. The 6'1 mom of three from Alexandria is a fierce competitor and she was on fire that day. "I kept hitting the ball harder and harder, I couldn't hit it wrong," she says.

All that adrenaline helped her team win the championship. It also took a toll on her right shoulder. Initially, she thought it was an overuse injury. But when the pain and weakness worsened to the point where she couldn't reach back and pick up a piece of paper, she knew something was seriously wrong.

Nadine consulted Commonwealth surgeon Daniel Weingold, MD, who had treated her sons' various bumps, bruises and broken bones over the years. Together they reviewed her MRI and Dr. Weingold delivered a surprising diagnosis. "I had a torn labrum and a partial tear of my rotator cuff," recalls Nadine, 47. "He told me, one hard fall and my shoulder would be gone."

Two days later, Dr. Weingold performed an arthroscopic repair of Nadine's torn labrum, the cuff of cartilage that surrounds the shoulder joint and helps provide stability to the shoulder. The procedure is known as superior labrum anterior and posterior (SLAP) repair. "We make several small incisions around the shoulder joint and use tiny instruments to repair and reattach the labrum," Dr. Weingold explains. "Anchors are inserted in the bone, and pre-loaded sutures are passed through the labrum and tied down to secure it in place while it heals." As part of the surgery, he also trimmed Nadine's rotator cuff tendon.

SLAP repair is a minimally invasive procedure with many benefits to the patient. "Arthroscopic repair of labral injuries allows surgeons a full view of the shoulder so they can reattach the torn tissue without having to cut through muscles," says Commonwealth surgeon Robert Dombrowski, MD, who performs SLAP repair. "Patients experience less pain and blood loss, fewer complications and a faster recovery. The result is a more balanced, stable repair that helps restore full function."

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After a repair of Nadine's torn shoulder labrum, she resumed her training to become a kettlebell instructor.



Robert M. Dombrowski, MD, received a BA in Biology from Washington and Jefferson College before going on to Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where he earned his medical degree. He then completed his surgical internship and residency training in orthopaedic surgery at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.



Daniel E. Weingold, MD, earned an undergraduate degree at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. He completed his medical degree at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and finished his surgical internship and orthopaedic residency training at George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, DC.

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