

Class IV Laser Therapy: Research, Conditions & Outcomes



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1

Why class IV laser?

- Implemented the switch from class III to class IV laser therapy at my practice in 2016
- How it started → How it's going
- We use multiple class IV lasers for a huge boost to our cash-based revenue.
- Track your results. We consistently see an 85-88% success rate.
- Build your confidence!

Laser Patient Tracking

Deb	B	Hand L	8	2	1	98	94	95 Hand arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Jennifer	R	Sacral	4	6	3	58		60 Lumbar arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Kay	H	Knee L	6	6		60		Knee arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Chase	B	Lumbar	12	2	0	14	0	90 Lumbar arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Dalton	H	Lumbar	24	5	2	42	8	90 Sciatic nerve protocol(November 2023)
Neil	S	Lumbar	24	3		52		Sciatic nerve protocol(November 2023)
Wade	M	Elbow R	6	2	1	79	100	80 Lateral epicondylitis protocol(November 2023)
Janice	R	Hip R	12	7	4	12	38	75 Hip arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Kevin	B	Lumbar	4	4	1	79		75 Plantar fasciitis protocol(November 2023)
Bob	G	Knee R	24	5		28		Knee arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Darlene	K	Shoulderf	3	6	1	78	98	100 Shoulder arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Randy	H	Shoulderf	6	4		51		Shoulder arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Don	H	Cervical	13	5	2	34	34	60 Cervical disc protocol(November 2023)
Dallas	S	Wrist L	17	3	1	69	81	60 Carpal tunnel syndrome(November 2023)
Dave	M	Cervical	12	5	1	44	10	75 Cervical disc protocol(November 2023)
Audrey	T	Shoulderf	6	9		16		Shoulder arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Judith	K	Cervical	1	5	0			100 Cervical arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Hilary	E	Hip R	5	6	0	89	96	100 Hip arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Cindy	E	Hip B	6	4	2	80	92	90 Hip arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Lauree	P	Knee B	6	6	2	66	72	70 Knee arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Lauree	P	Hip B	6	2	2	66	72	95 Hip arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Chad	A	Thoracic	12	4		52		Thoracic disc protocol(November 2023)
Denis	G	Foot R	1	6	0	86		100 Peripheral neuropathy protocol(November 2023)
Carol	R	Elbow B	9	4	0	38		100 Lateral epicondylitis protocol(November 2023)
Glen	M	Sacroiliac	7	6	2	46	26	50 Lumbar arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Angie	B	Shoulderf	4	3	1	62	79	50 Shoulder arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Rhae	B	Knee R	1	4	0	88		100 Knee arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Mike	L	Lumbar	24	9		58		Lumbar disc protocol(November 2023)
Jordan	H	Wrist B	7	10	3	65	96	90 Carpal tunnel syndrome(November 2023)
Judith	K	Hand R	3	2	1	79		90 Hand arthritis protocol(November 2023)
Rhae	R	Lumbar	6	3				Lumbar arthritis protocol(November 2023)

2016 2017 2018-2024 2024 +

2

Non-drug and non-surgical

- ▶ There is a massive need for non-drug and non-surgical options for acute and chronic pain conditions.
- ▶ The United States consumes nearly 70% of the world's prescription drugs, yet we only represent about 4% of the world population.
- ▶ Patients are hungry for and actively looking for solutions to their neuromusculoskeletal pain.
- ▶ If possible, many want to avoid drugs, shots and surgery.
- ▶ Medical management is basically drug it, numb it or cut it.

3

Enhance your care plans

- ▶ Chiropractic works, but not for everything.
- ▶ Effective laser therapy can enhance any patient care plan.
- ▶ Acute cases → 6 visits
- ▶ Chronic cases → 12 visits
- ▶ Niches: Chronic Neck or Back, Chronic Knee, Neuropathy → 24 visits



4

Silver or gold plans

- ▶ Class IV laser therapy is easy to use as an addition to any treatment plan.
- ▶ It's an easy cash-based service that gets real life-changing results.



5

Explaining to patients

- ▶ Keep it simple when explaining this therapy to patients.
- ▶ It reduces pain, reduces inflammation and stimulates healing.
- ▶ It is not painful to receive and has no side effects.
- ▶ Give them simple education-based handouts and brochures.



6

Research for musculoskeletal disorders

- ▶ “High-Intensity Laser Therapy for Musculoskeletal Disorders: A Systemic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Clinical Trials”
- ▶ Published in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine* in 2023
- ▶ Trials included 48 qualitative synthesis and 44 quantitative analysis
- ▶ Showed up to moderate quality evidence that high-intensity (class IV) laser therapy is an effective treatment for improving pain, functionality, range of motion and quality of life in people with musculoskeletal disorders.

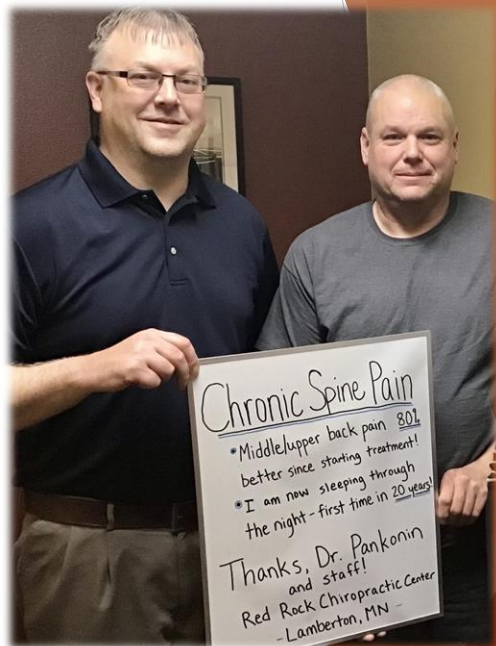


Journal of
Clinical Medicine

7

How it works

- ▶ Class IV laser therapy is a relatively new therapy.
- ▶ Its potential advantage is its greater depth of penetration and the possibility of delivering higher doses with lower exposure times.



8

Who is a good candidate?

- ▶ Just about anything that walks through the door of a typical chiropractic office is a potential laser patient.
- ▶ If they have pain and physical limitations, they are a candidate.



9

Let's examine the big-ticket conditions

- ▶ Let's look at some of the big-ticket conditions with research, how to work them up, protocols and success rates.
- ▶ These conditions can become niches and marketed as such.
- ▶ Your class IV laser will become the centerpiece of each protocol.



10

Chronic neck and back pain

- ▶ The best possible patient care all starts with a world-class exam.
- ▶ The key is to determine the primary pain generator.
- ▶ It is a disc, facet, SI, suboccipital compression or TOS?



11

Essentials of a world-class lumbar exam

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF00iSe5rNg>
- ▶ Access our *World-Class Examinations* playlist on our YouTube channel, @RedRockChiroLambertonMN

12

Documentation

- ▶ Have a CA help you document accurately and efficiently.
- ▶ Careful documentation practices will build confidence with the patient, set you apart as the expert and make it much more likely the patient will follow your treatment recommendations.



13

Laser/Decompression Protocol

- ▶ For chronic cases, especially disc-related conditions and stenosis
 - ▶ 24 visits over 3 months (3x/week first month; 2x/week second month; 1x/week third month)
 - ▶ Laser, decompression, chiropractic adjustments, custom orthotics, exercise instruction, disc support supplements
- ▶ For non-disc related conditions or non-stenosis
 - ▶ 6 or 12 visit protocol with laser and adjustments

14

Research supports laser for chronic low back pain

- ▶ “Effects of High-Intensity Laser in Treatment of Patients with Chronic Low Back Pain” *Open Access Journal of Medical Sciences*, March 2019
- ▶ This study showed patients with chronic low back pain treated with high-intensity laser had significantly reduced low back pain, reduced disability and improved range of motion.
- ▶ This positive effect was maintained for 3 months.
- ▶ Showed high-intensity laser as an effective, safe and useful physical modality in the treatment of patients with chronic low back pain.

15

Comprehensive program success

- ▶ Historically we have seen 80-94% success rates with our comprehensive program for the most challenging spine conditions.
- ▶ These are the 25% that cost 95% of the healthcare costs. The challenging disc and spinal stenosis patients.
- ▶ Track your own results

16

Essentials of a world-class cervical exam

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jlz0p1HBILl>
- ▶ Access our *World-Class Examinations* playlist on our YouTube channel, @RedRockChiroLambertonMN

17

Documentation

- ▶ Again, have a CA help document if possible.
- ▶ Explain the positives to the patient and what it means.
- ▶ This will give the “wow” factor.

18

Laser/Decompression Protocol

- ▶ For chronic cases, especially disc-related conditions and stenosis
 - ▶ 24 visits over 3 months (3x/week first month; 2x/week second month; 1x/week third month)
 - ▶ Laser, decompression, chiropractic adjustments, custom pillow, neck exercise instruction, disc support supplements
- ▶ For lesser conditions
 - ▶ 6 or 12 visits with laser and adjustments

19

Research supports laser for neck pain

- ▶ “Efficacy of high-intensity laser therapy in the treatment of chronic neck pain: a randomized double-blind placebo-control trial” *Lasers Med Sci*, May 2016
- ▶ Showed less pain, improved range of motion and improved function in 6 weeks of treatment.
- ▶ Another study on chronic neck pain is currently underway.

20

Program success

- ▶ Historically we have seen 85-90% success rates with treating the most challenging neck conditions.
- ▶ 50% or greater relief with chronic pain is considered an excellent clinical outcome
- ▶ Meaningful clinical improvement determination is 30% - the minimal amount of improvement that a patient finds worthwhile

21

Surgical... success? rate

- ▶ For chronic back pain, first surgery has a 10-50% failure rate
- ▶ Second surgery 50% failure rate
- ▶ Third surgery 70% failure rate
- ▶ Fourth surgery, forget it! Almost no chance of success.
- ▶ *60% of all spinal surgeries are unnecessary*



22

Epidural steroid shots

- ▶ There is a lot of variability in studies.
- ▶ Some of the latest show epidural steroid shots help about 32% of the time for an average of about 6 weeks.
- ▶ They are NOT FDA-approved for spine pain. They are being used off-label.
- ▶ They actually speed up degenerative processes and weaken bone density.

23

Building your practice

- ▶ If you do nothing but get really good at treating chronic neck and back pain, you will have a thriving practice.
- ▶ We need great doctors with great protocols to take on challenging conditions.
- ▶ Class IV laser will be integral to your success in the battle of saving people from unnecessary and risky shots and surgery.



24

Chronic Knee Pain

- ▶ This is another powerful niche area.
- ▶ A world-class knee exam will set you apart as a knee expert.
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYJkT33to6Q>



25

Comprehensive Knee Protocol

- ▶ For osteoarthritis, some meniscus injuries and chronic patellofemoral issues
 - ▶ 24 visits over 3 months (3x/week first month; 2x/week second month; 1x/week third month)
 - ▶ Laser, knee decompression, custom orthotics, knee exercises and joint support supplements
- ▶ For less complex or acute cases
 - ▶ 6 or 12 visit protocols with laser and other treatments you feel necessary

26

Research supports laser for knee pain

- ▶ “Effects of low-level and high-intensity laser therapy as adjunctive to rehabilitation exercise on pain, stiffness and function in knee osteoarthritis: a systemic review and meta-analysis” *Physiotherapy* March 2022
- ▶ Both LLT and HILT are beneficial as adjuncts to rehabilitation exercise in the management of KOA.
- ▶ Based on an indirect comparison, the HILT + E seems to have higher efficacy in reducing knee pain and stiffness, and in increasing function.
- ▶ To confirm this finding, a direct comparative investigation of the two types of laser therapy may be necessary.

27

Program success

- ▶ Historically we have seen anywhere from an 82-94% success rate treating chronic knee pain with our comprehensive protocol.
- ▶ How many patients can you help to avoid useless shots and unnecessary surgeries?



28

Tracking results

- ▶ Outcome assessments are so important for tracking patient results.
- ▶ They help to show patients while their pain level may not be radically changed yet, they may indeed be able to function better in their daily activities.
- ▶ Improved function is a success marker.



29

Plantar fasciitis & other foot conditions

- ▶ This is an overlooked potential niche area.
- ▶ A world-class foot exam will set you apart as a plantar fasciitis and foot pain expert.
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmjSyNRosKo>



30

Comprehensive Foot Protocol

- ▶ For most foot conditions
 - ▶ 6 or 12 visits
 - ▶ Laser therapy, foot roller, custom orthotics, foot-strengthening exercises, adjustments and Graston Technique
- ▶ Some chronic conditions take more visits

31

Research supports laser for plantar fasciitis

- ▶ “Effectiveness of high-intensity laser therapy in patients with plantar fasciitis: A systematic review with meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials”
Advances in Rehabilitation 2023
- ▶ Findings suggest high-intensity laser therapy significantly reduces pain in the first steps and has an impact on the quality of life of plantar fasciitis patients, with effects lasting at least 3 months.

32

Building your practice

- ▶ Adding a foot pain niche to your practice opens a world of possibilities because most patients with foot issues also have knee, hip or spine issues.



33

Peripheral neuropathy

- ▶ This is by far the most challenging niche but can be so rewarding to help these patients who have no other good options.
- ▶ A world-class neuropathy exam will set you apart as the expert.
- ▶ (exam video link)
- ▶ Toronto Clinical Scoring System: 20 points or higher is considered a good candidate



34

Comprehensive neuropathy protocol

- ▶ 24 visits over 3 months (3x/week first month; 2x/week second month; 1x/week third month)
- ▶ Laser therapy, electroanalgesia, vibration therapy, decompression or traction therapy, nutritional nerve support supplement

35

Research supports laser for peripheral neuropathy

- ▶ “Effect of High-Power Laser Therapy on Modified Total Neuropathy Score in Patients with Chemotherapy Induced Peripheral Neuropathy”
Med. J. Cairo Univ. 2020
- ▶ Results suggest the use of high-powered laser therapy has a significant effect on the modified total neuropathy score in patients with chemotherapy induced neuropathy.

36

More research support

- ▶ “Effect of deep tissue laser therapy treatment on peripheral neuropathic pain in older adults with type 2 diabetes: a pilot randomized clinical trial” *BMC Geriatr.* 2019
- ▶ Deep tissue laser therapy significantly reduced pain and improved the quality of life of older patients with painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy.

37

Program success

- ▶ Historically we have been able to help 77-85% of our peripheral neuropathy cases achieve 50% or greater relief.
- ▶ For some patients, the improvement is life-changing.



38

Other pain conditions

- ▶ Carpal tunnel syndrome
 - ▶ Lateral and medial epicondylitis
 - ▶ Shoulder impingement syndrome, bursitis & rotator cuff tendinopathies
 - ▶ Greater trochanteric pain syndrome
-
- ▶ All these conditions can easily be put into 6 or 12 visit packages depending if they are acute or chronic in nature.
 - ▶ You will consistently see an 85-88% success rate.



39

Return on investment

- ▶ It is quite easy to pay off the total cost for a class IV laser within 1 year or less if you implement and use it wisely.



40

Marketing

- ▶ Introduce the new technology with a series of 3 e-mails detailing the new service and its benefits.
- ▶ Make videos of patients receiving and sharing the results they are experiencing.
- ▶ You don't need a lot of marketing to get this started - many patients who can benefit from class IV laser therapy are those who are already established with your practice.



41

Class IV laser pricing

- ▶ Price it for your area
- ▶ Use packages
 - ▶ 6 visits for acute
 - ▶ 12 visits for chronic
 - ▶ 24 visits for niches
- ▶ VA Community Care Network referrals and some PI cases may pay for laser
- ▶ Otherwise, it is mostly a cash-based service

42

Coding

- ▶ CPT code S8948 low level laser constant attendance
- ▶ You can use this if billing certain insurances such as VA Community Care Network referrals or PI cases.



43

Interested in developing niches?

- ▶ If you think a niche practice might be right for you, visit with me outside of this lecture.
- ▶ 507-752-7650 or drpankonin@hotmail.com

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44