

# Atlas Physical Therapy

## Helps Tennis Player Excel

Lower back pain sidelined active tennis player Rosaura "Mac" Macaraeg in early April. At 62, the captain of the USTA-sanctioned Senior League Pace Island Tennis Team had a tough schedule ahead, and he hated letting his teammates down. Determined to get back to his tennis game as quickly as possible, he turned to the pros at Atlas Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine to help him with his recovery.

Macaraeg started out with licensed physical therapist and certified athletic trainer Leo Calderon after injuring his back doing yard work. "I knew something was wrong, because I felt something crack in my back," Macaraeg says. "That was on a Sunday, and I went ahead and played a full day of tennis anyway. It was a league match, and our team won, so we played again on Tuesday. By Wednesday morning I was in so much pain I was in tears."

Macaraeg visited a chiropractor but was told an adjustment couldn't be done because of the risk of causing further aggravation to the injury. After seeing his family doctor who ordered an MRI, Macaraeg learned that while nothing was broken, physical therapy was recommended.

"When my doctor referred me to Atlas, I was somewhat apprehensive," Macaraeg admits. "I had had a bad experience with physical therapy several years ago, and was skeptical of whether it would greatly help me."

After an initial interview and evaluation, Calderon put Macaraeg on a regimen that included basic core strengthening, lumbar stabilization and manual therapy to increase his range of motion. "We used a team approach with Mac," explains Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant and Licensed Massage Therapist Dawn Martin. "Leo and I both provided aspects of the therapy. That also included education in body mechanics and functional activities. He was highly motivated, and was a pleasure to work with."

"My goal was to get back to playing with my team," says Macaraeg, who retired after 30 years in the Navy. "As team captain, I didn't want to forsake my team. We had the state championship tournament coming up in Daytona in mid-May, and I was really determined to be able to play in it. So I kept up with my therapy and the routines my therapists gave me to do at home. Initially, I was sore, but the therapy did wonders."

"We worked with Mac to help him improve his abdominal strength," says Martin. "Strengthening the abdominals helps to stabilize the lower back. Also, we learned that he had been playing tennis without warming up beforehand, so we taught him how to actively warm up with 30 minutes of stretching, and to cool down post-game. As a result of all the therapy and his positive mental attitude, he got to the point where he could not only play tennis with absolutely no pain, he found that his game actually improved."

That improvement in his tennis game was even more than Macaraeg expected, he says. "Right before the finals, I asked Leo, 'can I play?' He told me, 'Mac, you know your body. You can play, but don't overdo it.' Our team ended up winning in the finals, and now we're the state champions in the senior division. We will represent Florida in the Nationals in October. I owe the therapists at Atlas a lot. I don't believe I would be in this position without their help. I know it's their job, but they went beyond the call of duty for me."



"It was rewarding for us to be able to help Mac resume his recreational activities, especially because he has such a great passion for tennis," says Martin. "He is above average for someone his age, and he doesn't look like he's 62. We do see his type of back injury a lot in people of all ages. A lack of lumbar stability can contribute to back injuries. Many people aren't aware of core body mechanics – proper lifting, for example. It's important to use the strength of the legs instead of bending at the waist to lift. Even something like bending to do the laundry or lifting a child can injure the back. Repetitive motions of any kind, whether in everyday activities or sports, can also increase back pain and dysfunction."

For more information on how Atlas Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine can help you recover from an injury, alleviate chronic pain or improve your sports performance safely, call 904-292-0195 or visit [www.atlasphysicaltherapy.com](http://www.atlasphysicaltherapy.com).

Atlas Physical Therapy accepts most insurance plans. Hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturdays by appointment.

Atlas Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine helps athletes and patients of all ages and abilities get back to work and everyday living. Among the therapy advantages offered are:

- \* Post-op Procedures including Total Joint Replacement
- \* Aquatic Therapy
- \* Electro-therapy
- \* Ultrasound
- \* Soft Tissue Mobilization/Massage
- \* Joint Mobilization
- \* Mechanical Traction
- \* Therapeutic Exercise & Passive Range of Motion
- \* Isokinetic Testing and Exercise
- \* Aerobic & Cardiovascular Exercise
- \* Gait Training
- \* Biofeedback
- Hydrotherapy
- Comprehensive Women's Therapy

**Atlas Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine, Inc.**

**"NO EXCUSES...JUST RESULTS"**

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