

Surgical Re-Focus

The new field of upper extremity specialists

In the area of the upper extremity: shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand and fingers, a surgeon would traditionally refer to himself as a hand surgeon or a shoulder surgeon or an elbow surgeon, etc. Now there is an entire group of surgeons coming out of medical school with fellowships under knowledgeable and experienced mentors who have broadened their focus and specialty to include the entire upper extremity, everything from the base of the neck to the tips of the fingers.

Dr. Michael Rubinstein, an upper extremity surgeon, with offices in the Placentia Linda Medical Center was one of the first to expand his focus from just the shoulder to the entire upper extremity.

Dr. Rubinstein, who studied shoulder surgery at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City and then did an additional fellowship in hand surgery at Harvard Medical School, was the first surgeon to ever perform a total shoulder replacement at a hand surgery group.

Dr. Rubinstein was drawn to minimally invasive shoulder surgery because he felt that

there were unlimited horizons for arthroscopic applications on the shoulder. Then he expanded his specialty to include the entire upper extremity when he realized that this could help him more accurately identify the true source of his patient's problem.

According to Dr. Rubinstein, in nearly 20% of his cases, the actual problem is not where it was thought to be. "Sometimes pain or immobility in the elbow may actually be caused by a problem in the shoulder joint or the muscular connection that runs the length of the arm.

Understanding how all the muscles, bones and tendons tie together in the upper extremity can often save time or lessen the amount of surgery needed by helping to quickly identify the source of the pain or immobility," says Dr. Rubinstein.

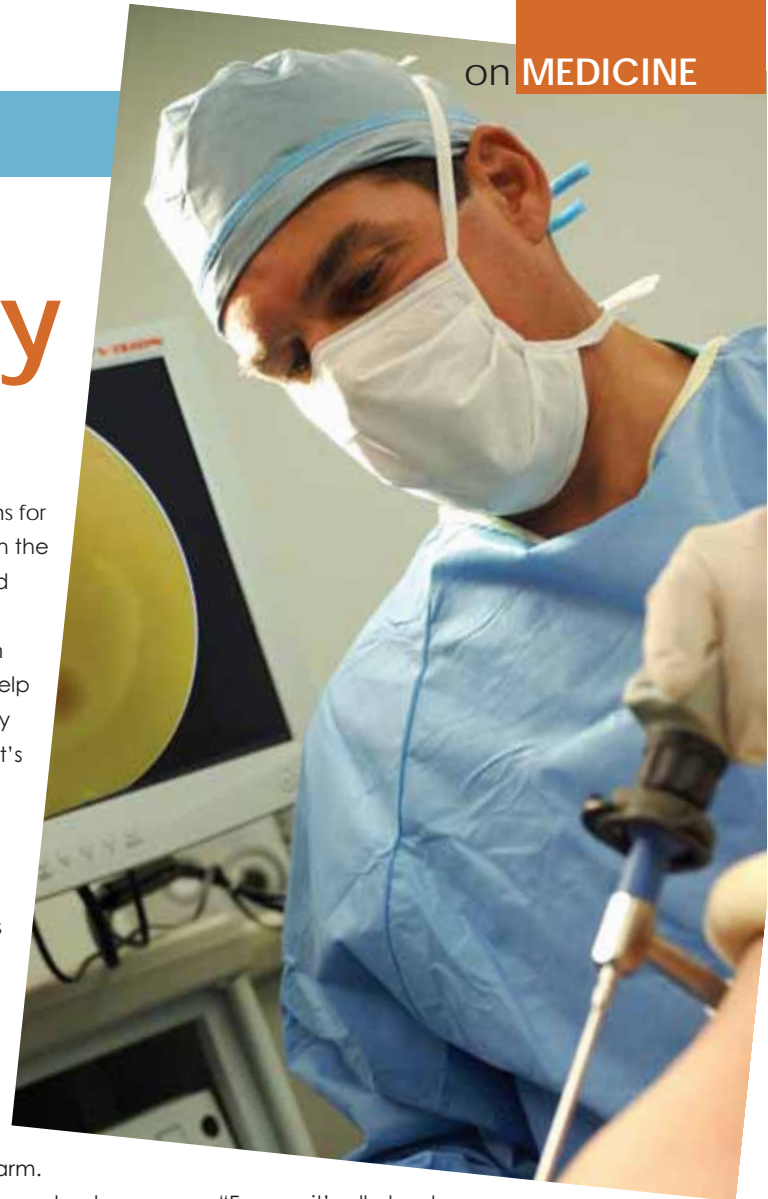
"For me, it's all about changing lives," says Dr. Rubinstein, "Getting people back to their normal lives and helping them function at the highest level possible is a great feeling. And the opportunity to instill my passion and interest to other young doctors

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Dr. Rubinstein, who has an obvious passion for what he does, is an outspoken advocate for learning and teaching upper extremity surgery. In addition to a busy practice with an office at Placentia Linda Hospital and family obligations as a husband and father of three active children, Rubinstein maintains a volunteer teaching position at the University of California at Irvine so that he can pass on years of knowledge as well as his enthusiasm for this area of expertise.

is something that I am eternally grateful for. I am sure that with the recent advancements in this field there will be even greater interest from the medical community and ultimately our patients will get even better results as we continue to learn and grow."

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