

Business Courier

INDUSTRY COLUMN: HEALTH CARE

Surgery too unkind a cut says Roling expert

By Andrea Tortora

Richard Rossiter believes surgery isn't always the best route, and here's why: scar tissue, stiff joints and body parts that don't work as they used to before the operation.

To help his clients make more informed decisions about surgery, Rossiter and wife Sue MacDonald just published *Surgery Sucks!!!! Fix Your Body Without Needles, Knives, Scalpels, 'Scopes, Lasers – Or Other Sharp Stuff!*

The book (Bramkamp Printing; \$35) is a compilation of 100 two-person stretching exercises designed to loosen entire areas of connective tissue and restore mobility and circulation to bring pain relief and easier movement.

"Surgery is irreversible," said Rossiter, who is certified as an advanced Rolfer, a body therapy technique that specializes in manipulating connective tissue. "This should be a first jump-to rather than surgery."

It appears Rossiter's ways are catching on.

Dr. Dorothy Shaffer, an internist and acupuncturist who will open a Cincinnati practice this month, plans to use Rossiter's techniques with her patients.

"It appeals to me because it avoids surgery and it heals the problem as opposed to treating the symptom," Shaffer said. "And it involves the

person more in their own health care."

Dr. Sandra Eisele, CEO of Wellington Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine, said Rossiter's and MacDonald's book sounds like a good way to "apply some athletic principles to the workplace. It probably goes along with what many workplaces are doing on wellness and general health and conditioning. And it pays off in the end."

Eisele, who trains the members of the Cincinnati Ballet, said such stretches and exercises can reduce injuries.

"If this can bring to light a new application, it will help people work better and be more efficient," she said. "And sometimes, surgery does suck."

Rossiter and MacDonald are not suggesting that all surgery is bad or unnecessary. What they are saying is that there are other ways to remove the pain caused by arthritis, tendonitis and even a torn rotator cuff.

The "Rossiter Way" is a form of Roling that uses the feet, rather than the hands, to apply pressure. For any stretch, a "coach" applies pressure while the "patient" stretches the limb or muscles being worked on.

"You stretch from the inside while weight is

applied from the outside," Rossiter said. The result is a nearly immediate loosening of the surrounding connective tissue.

A former helicopter pilot who searched for relief from chronic shoulder pain, Rossiter now teaches people how to use powerful, two-person stretches to change the nature of the body's connective tissue.

Rossiter owns Rossiter & Associates Inc., a national firm based in Cincinnati that helps companies lower and eliminate work-related injuries by offering employees unique ways to stay in shape while on the job. Employees are trained to do the stretches with each other.

Clients Sauder Woodworking in Archbold, Ohio; Bunn-O-Matic in Creston, Iowa, and Quebecor/World Color in Modesto, Calif., all saw an average 70% reduction in medical costs. Data compiled by an independent auditor that shows how companies saved money and reduced lost work days through the Rossiter program are available at www.rossiter.com.

MacDonald said the book developed from the seminars Rossiter gives across the country. Photos and descriptions for the stretches came from those workshops. The guidebook also includes a chapter on when not to do the stretches.

"Surgery Sucks" also draws from MacDonald's more than 20 years as a

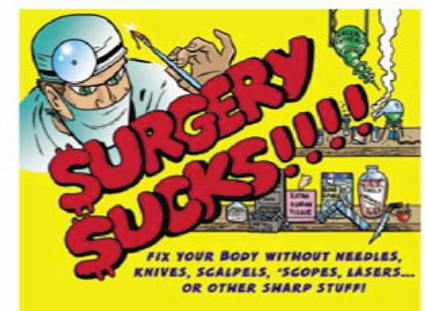
health care reporter at the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. The book includes loads of facts and statistics on the state of health care today, from medical errors to surgical robots.

Ideally, Rossiter and MacDonald want to help people out of pain.

"These techniques help you find your pain inside the spaces where it hurts the most," MacDonald said. The stretches then work the pain out.

The book is available at Bob Roncker's Running Spot in O'Bryonville, Joseph-Beth Booksellers in Norwood or www.surgerysucks.com

Andrea Tortora covers health care for the Courier. Call her with story tips at (513) 621-6665, or e-mail her at atortora@bizjournals.com



"Surgery Sucks" includes 100 stretching exercises to loosen connective tissue.