
OLYMPIAN'S FUNKY TAPE DRAWS CONVERTS

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WHITE PLAINS - In Beijing, strange body art began showing up on Olympic **athletes**. Hot pink, black and peachy tape was affixed to skin, most obviously on beach volleyball player Kerri Walsh, whose regulation bikini didn't cover her decorated shoulder.

It was Kinesio Tape, a fabric bandage with adhesive in a wave formation on the sticky side. Some athletes obviously wear the tape - Lance Armstrong wore it to alleviate shin splints during his New York City Marathon run, and Serena Williams has worn it for large tournaments. And with its visibility increased, the tape is filtering down through the ranks of serious athletes.

One of those is Antonio Corrado, a John Jay **graduate** who played professional soccer in Italy until a rotator-cuff injury brought him back home to Katonah for surgery and recovery.



Dr. Robert Silverman applies Kinesio Tape to Antonio Corrado's shoulder at his chiropractic office in White Plains. Corrado, a soccer player from Katonah, is recovering from a rotator-cuff injury. (Frank Becerra Jr./The Journal News)

After spending time playing for team Molise, a region near Naples, the 18-year-old is eager to resume his **career** and international life. Corrado wanted to get back to training as quickly as possible, but didn't want to cause more pain or injury to his healing shoulder.

He found out about the tape - which is said to provide support but with more flexibility than traditional tape - at a local gym. Curious, he had his shoulder taped.

"You can feel it. It's weird, but it's a good sensation," Corrado said. " ... It worked. When I was training I didn't feel as much pain."

Dr. Robert Silverman, a chiropractor based in White Plains, is one of the few people in the Lower Hudson Valley licensed to use the official Japanese taping method. Interest in the method has risen. The official Kinesio Tape Web site got 400,000 hits the day after NBC commentators identified it during the Olympics.

The Games impose such tight restrictions that using certain cough medicines and hair-growth products can get an athlete barred from competition, yet the tape was allowed for use in Beijing because it is not considered performance-enhancing.

Which leads to the question: Does it really work, or is it just a fad?

Silverman said the tape is less restrictive than conventional athletic tape, and that the way it is applied can "turn down" injured muscles, allowing others to support movement. There isn't any magic potion in the adhesive. Silverman said it improves blood flow to the taped area, and the tape can stay on for three to five days. It is therapy more than it is medical science. In fact, you wouldn't find a physician providing the tape.

"It's not in their box," Silverman said. "I'm a sports-specific kind of provider."

The taping method was developed over 25 years ago by Kenzo Kase. In Japan, it was hot pink or teal. When it became popular in the United States, black rolls of tape were manufactured due to athlete preference. Athletes account for only a small portion of sales, however; children with muscular disorders are a larger clientele.

Silverman said he uses the tape in conjunction with other rehabilitative therapies, hoping to hit upon the right combination for a specific injury. The tape itself costs about \$15 a roll and is good for six to eight applications.

An athlete such as Corrado can pay about \$100 for an appointment. He recently came in to have his shoulder taped in a "Y" pattern - and didn't mind the hot pink to further his rehabilitation. "Do it, baby," he told Silverman.

"I do it in the beginning of the week," Corrado said, "so throughout the week I will be OK."