

Active Bones

Orthopaedic Surgery and Sports Medicine
Teaching and Research Foundation Newsletter



otrfund.org

Spring / Summer 2026

Dear Readers,






As spring awakens and summer calls, orthopaedic care brings fresh breakthroughs for faster recoveries, less pain, and more time enjoying what you love. In this issue, discover Dr. Chudik's eight patented innovations spanning shoulder replacements, AC joint repairs, growth plate-sparing ACL surgery for young athletes, and more; follow Yankees shortstop Anthony Volpe's inspiring labrum recovery; explore AI's role in predicting injuries; celebrate patient Michael Wirtz's double shoulder replacement triumphs; and gain simple habits for lifelong joint health. These stories reflect our mission at OTRF: pioneering innovation with personalized care to get you moving confidently again.

Wishing you the best in health and wellness,

Dr. Steven Chudik
President OTRF
Orthopaedic Surgeon and Sports Medicine Physician



In This Issue:

-  **Innovation Spotlight:** Explore Dr. Chudik's eight patented breakthroughs, each designed to help patients recover faster and move better
-  **Seasonal Conditions:** Yankees shortstop Anthony Volpe's inspiring return after labrum surgery
-  **What's Trending:** How AI is predicting sports injuries and enhancing athlete recovery
-  **Community Connections:** Michael Wirtz's success story after double shoulder replacements
-  **Health & Wellness Tips:** Simple daily habits to keep your joints strong and moving for life

***"If my mind can conceive it,
and my heart can believe it—
then I can achieve it."***

- Muhammad Ali



Eight Patents, One Purpose: Helping Patients Move Better

Dr. Chudik's Innovations in Shoulder & Knee Surgery

When most people look at a shoulder or knee injury, they see a problem to fix. Dr. Steven Chudik sees an opportunity to improve how it's fixed. As a pioneer in arthroscopic shoulder and knee surgery, he constantly asks how to make procedures safer, less invasive, and more reliable for patients—an approach that has led to eight U.S. patents over the course of his career. That mindset has helped athletes and active patients recover with less pain, fewer complications, and a quicker return to the activities they love.

One of his newest advances is a minimally invasive, rotator cuff–sparing shoulder replacement that preserves vital shoulder muscles and avoids joint dislocation. By not dislocating the shoulder, surgical trauma is minimized, lowering risks of nerve injury, fractures, and other complications. Patients can move their arm immediately after surgery, avoiding up to 6 weeks in a sling and potentially shortening recovery from 6 months to as little as 6-12 weeks.

Another patented procedure focuses on acromioclavicular (AC) joint separations—the painful “shoulder separation” that often happens after a hard fall or collision. In this injury, the end of the collarbone is pushed out of place and the ligaments that hold it to the shoulder are torn. Dr. Chudik's AC joint reconstruction technique carefully puts the collarbone back where it belongs and rebuilds the torn ligaments using a tendon graft and strong fixation to hold everything steady while it heals. This approach is designed to restore normal shoulder alignment, lower the chance that the joint separates again, and help patients return to lifting, reaching overhead, and playing sports with less pain and better strength.

His innovation extends to growing athletes as well. With his arthroscopic, growth plate–sparing ACL reconstruction, Dr. Chudik developed a way to reconstruct a torn ACL in children without damaging the growth plates—critical structures that guide leg length and alignment. Instead of being told to wait until they are older and give up sports in the meantime, many young athletes can safely return to running, cutting, and pivoting with a stable knee and healthy future growth.

These examples highlight only a few of the ways that his innovations are reshaping shoulder and knee care. Across all of his innovations, the mindset is the same: protect what matters most in the joint, tailor treatment to the individual, and design surgery around how patients want to move years from now. For patients, that translates into more choices, safer procedures, and a more confident path back to everyday activities and the sports they enjoy.



AC Joint Reconstruction

The Comeback Shortstop

Anthony Volpe's Labrum Surgery and Return to the Field

New York Yankees shortstop Anthony Volpe missed significant playing time in 2025 after undergoing arthroscopic surgery in May for a torn labrum in his left shoulder. The labrum is a ring of fibrocartilage that helps stabilize the shoulder joint while it allows the wide range of motion essential for throwing, swinging, and fielding—movements central to baseball. This injury, common among overhead athletes due to repetitive high-velocity stresses, typically demands precise surgical repair followed by an extended period of rehabilitation to rebuild stability, strength, and confidence.

Volpe's procedure addressed the tear effectively, but his return path includes phased therapy emphasizing rotator cuff strengthening, scapular control, and sport-specific drills to withstand baseball's torque. Targeting full clearance by May 2026—just as MLB spring training intensifies—demonstrates the calculated timelines in elite sports medicine. Throughout rehab, Volpe has stayed engaged with his team in strategizing and conditioning, blending mental acuity with physical gains to prime for his All-Star role.

His journey shows how recovery from a shoulder labral tear injury happens in stages. Arthroscopic surgery uses small incisions, which helps limit damage to the surrounding tissues and can allow for a better recovery. After surgery, it is important to slowly increase activity and exercises instead of jumping back too fast, because feeling better early on can be misleading and may lead to doing too much, too soon. Pushing too hard can affect healing, aggravating the shoulder and delaying healing.

The best approach is to follow a well-structured rehab plan—to protect the repair, restore range of motion and strength, gradually progress to advanced strengthening, and a return to throwing program. Volpe's determination offers hope for patients tackling shoulder setbacks, illustrating that with surgical expertise, disciplined rehab, and psychological grit, athletes and active individuals can return to high-level play.



Reference: MLB 2025, Yankees Official Updates 2026

AI in Sports Medicine

Predicting Injuries and Enhancing Recovery

Top 6 AI Innovations Reshaping Sports

1. Hyper-Personalized Athlete Training and Recovery
2. AI-Powered Injury Prevention
3. Real-Time Strategy and Predictive Analytics
4. Automated Scouting and Talent ID
5. Immersive and Personalized Fan Experiences
6. AI-Enhanced Sports Broadcasting

Artificial intelligence is transforming sports medicine by analyzing vast data sets to prevent knee and shoulder injuries before they sideline athletes. AI systems evaluate biomechanics from game footage and wearables, spotting patterns like faulty throwing mechanics or landing imbalances that signal risks for labrum tears, ACL tears, meniscus damage, or rotator cuff tear injuries.

Teams like MLB franchises use AI to optimize pitching rotations and player workloads, reducing overuse injuries common in overhead sports. In scouting, it assesses thousands of variables—including movement efficiency—to predict long-term joint health and recovery potential, shifting from guesswork to precise evaluations.

This technology complements orthopaedic expertise, powering predictive tools that guide rehab protocols and enable faster, safer returns to play. As AI evolves, it promises proactive care that keeps athletes and active patients stronger, longer.



References: PwC Sports Outlook 2026 and AI World Today 2026

Thriving After Bilateral Shoulder Replacements

Michael Wirtz's Journey of Resilience and Recovery

Michael Wirtz's story with Dr. Chudik began about a decade ago when he fell on his left shoulder on the ice in his driveway. He endured pain and limited mobility for several years before making the decision to undergo left shoulder replacement in April 2021.

While protecting his left side, Michael then injured his right shoulder, leading to tears in both and the need for bilateral replacements. The second surgery in April 2024 went smoother and quicker than the first, though healing took longer since he's right-handed. Owning his own business meant no time off: "I couldn't stay home and recuperate, so had to work while rehabbing both times."

Both surgeries felt scary, but the second was less daunting since he knew what to expect. A lifelong athlete who played tennis, racquetball, and basketball in high school—and always worked out—Michael pushed through physical therapy despite the challenges.

Today, nearing 69, he's doing well: "This year I golfed, swam correctly, and I'm able to do most things." Rebuilding upper body strength takes time, but he's committed. He praises Dr. Chudik and his team: "All the staff are very professional and knowledgeable... and they all take the time to listen when you're asking questions. That to me is very important to the complete treatment of any patient."



Michael's advice is clear and emphatic: "My advice to anyone getting any kind of surgery is to listen to what they tell you, and do the rehab you're told to do. Not just at the rehab facility, but do it every day." He's seen friends skip rehab and face repeat surgeries, reinforcing his daily workout routine despite spinal stenosis and other issues.

Michael's double-shoulder triumphs show that with trust in expert care, daily discipline, and perseverance, active living remains possible at any age.



Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine Teaching & Research Foundation

Thank You for Reading!



Sign up to receive the next issue of **Active Bones** by emailing us at contactus@chudikmd.com or on otrfund.org.

Need orthopaedic care or advice? Contact Dr. Chudik's team today at stevenchudikmd.com or via email.



Joint Longevity Habits as You Age

- 1. Stay Active Smartly:** Choose low-impact exercises like swimming, cycling, or walking to keep joints moving without excess wear, building strength around knees and shoulders.
- 2. Eat for Joint Health:** Focus on anti-inflammatory foods rich in omega-3s (fish), antioxidants (berries), and vitamin D to support cartilage and reduce arthritis risk.
- 3. Maintain Healthy Weight:** Achieve and sustain an optimal weight through balanced nutrition and strength training—every pound lost reduces knee stress by four pounds—helping preserve long-term mobility.

UPCOMING: VIRTUAL SPORTS MEDICINE CONFERENCE

Email us to join weekly on Friday's
Earn 1 CEU/CME

Stay connected with us on social



 Instagram



 facebook



 TikTok