Are you missing out on your favorite activities because of chronic joint, muscle, or tendon pain? What if you could return to a more active lifestyle with the help of a musculoskeletal specialist like Dr. Joseph Mulka?

Dr. Mulka employs minimally invasive procedures to bring relief and rejuvenation to patients with musculoskeletal pain. He joined Nebraska Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine, PC, nearly three years ago, after completing a residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Mayo Clinic. He has been interested in musculoskeletal studies since he was a teenager, and he earned his PhD in biomedical engineering before going to medical school at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit.

Dr. Mulka and his colleagues at Nebraska Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine provide a full spectrum of orthopaedic services, both surgical and non-surgical. Dr. Mulka specializes in non-surgical procedures, such as musculoskeletal injections, as well as electromyography (EMG) and nerve conditioning studies (NCS). With EMG/NCS, a mild electrical impulse stimulates the nerve at one point while Dr. Mulka evaluates the nerve response at another point to determine the root of the problem. “Then we evaluate the muscles controlled by those nerves,” he explains. This test is commonly performed on patients experiencing numbness or tingling in the arms or legs due to pinched nerves in the neck and lower back. The test can also diagnose patients with carpal tunnel syndrome.

With every new patient, Dr. Mulka performs a specialized examination and listens carefully to his patient’s concerns. After arriving at a diagnosis, Dr. Mulka recommends the treatment plan that he feels will best fit his patient’s individual needs. He strives to keep his patients’ comfort in mind during examinations, consultations, and treatments. “I want to provide compassionate care with the least amount of anxiety,” he says.

Most of the procedures Dr. Mulka uses to bring pain relief to his patients can be done in the office. To reduce joint and musculoskeletal pain, he may recommend ultrasound-guided musculoskeletal injections. Ultrasound technology allows him to more accurately target specific areas when injecting substances like cortisone, hyaluronic acid, or the patient’s own platelet-rich plasma. A new substance called AMNIOVISC is used to treat tendonitis, bursitis, and arthritis. It provides cushioning in the joint and increases mobility.

Tenex Health TX is a minimally invasive surgical procedure that Dr. Mulka employs to treat chronic tendon pain related to plantar fasciitis, tennis elbow, and tendonitis. In this procedure, Dr. Mulka first uses ultrasound to identify specific areas of damaged tissue and then numbs the areas with a local anesthetic. He applies gentle ultrasonic energy to break down and remove the damaged tissue through a micro incision. Once the tissue is removed, a bandage is applied. The patient is awake during the entire procedure, which usually takes about 30 minutes. Dr. Mulka performs this outpatient procedure at the Nebraska Surgery Center on the CHI Health St. Elizabeth campus.

Patient Cindy Beenblossom found out she was a candidate for Tenex Health TX after her primary care doctor referred her to Dr. Mulka. She suffered from severe plantar fasciitis and had tried physical therapy, stretching exercises, and purchasing new shoes and inserts. After seven months of suffering, she found relief with Dr. Mulka and the Tenex Health TX procedure. Cindy notes that the incision was smaller than a dime and that she was back on her feet at the gym just a few days later. She stresses that Dr. Mulka was very attentive to her extreme foot sensitivity. “He kept asking me, ‘Are you okay?’ He was concerned about me, even when he was just doing the ultrasound.” She appreciates that Dr. Mulka spoke in a language she could understand, too, without a heavy dose of medical terminology. “He was very thorough from beginning to end, explaining what the procedure would be like,” she says. “He helped me relax, as much as I could.”

At the end of the day, Dr. Mulka says his greatest reward is helping someone return to a more active lifestyle. His patients also get the benefit of his colleagues’ expertise: If all non-surgical options have been exhausted and a patient is still in pain, Dr. Mulka may refer the patient to another physician within the group for surgical treatment. Referrals go both ways, Dr. Mulka says, with colleagues often referring patients to him to explore nonsurgical methods first. Other services available at Nebraska Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine include reconstructive surgeries of the shoulder, elbow, and knee; partial and total knee replacement; total hip replacement and hip resurfacing; revisions of total joint replacements; spine care; fracture care; treatment for injuries of the foot, ankle, hand, and wrist; and general orthopaedics.

Nebraska Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine, PC, is an independent practice located in the CHI Health St. Elizabeth Medical Plaza that accepts all major insurance. For more information about their specialists and services, visit www.nebraskaoortho.com. To schedule an appointment, call 402-488-3322.