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The 28 Top U.S. Shoulder Surgeons

OTW Staff • Tue, Jun 26th, 2012

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If a shoulder specialist has a torn rotator cuff, whom do they go to for advice? Here are the answers! Shoulder surgeons at the top of their game let us know their thoughts on the best orthopedic surgeons in their subspecialty.

Here is that list. We don't have "the market" on lists...this isn't the be-all and end-all list—but it is a list of the most impressive shoulder surgeons in the country. This information was obtained via a telephone survey of thought leaders in the field. The information in quotes is what we heard about these surgeons.

In alphabetical order, here are the top 28 shoulder surgeons in the United States.

★ Joseph A. Abboud, M.D.

Dr. Abboud is an orthopedic surgeon at the Rothman Institute in Philadelphia and associate professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. "He is an extremely talented clinician and researcher with a lot of funded research projects. He is an innovator and has been involved in designing new shoulder prostheses."

★ April D. Armstrong, M.D.

Dr. Armstrong is associate professor of Orthopaedic Shoulder and Elbow Surgery at Penn State Hershey Bone and Joint Institute in Pennsylvania. "She is a rising star, and has developed several models of glenoid bone loss. She is very involved in resident education and instructs other faculty on how to best educate residents."

★ John-Erik Bell, M.D.

Dr. Bell is an orthopedic surgeon with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire. He is also assistant professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

and The Dartmouth Institute. "He is getting a masters degree in epidemiology specializing in public health outcomes. Basically, he is helping to determine whether or not what we do as surgeons is cost effective. He has also made a significant contribution to our understanding of the geographical distribution of shoulder problems."



Louis U. Bigliani, M.D.

Dr. Bigliani is the Frank E. Stinchfield Professor and chairman in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Columbia University Medical Center. He is also chief of the Shoulder Service at the Center of Shoulder, Elbow and Sports Medicine at Columbia University Medical Center and is a past president of the American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons (ASES). "He is a great educator, researcher, and clinician with a tremendous amount of experience. He is well regarded and is a thoughtful leader."



Stephen S. Burkhart, M.D.

Dr. Burkhart is an orthopedic surgeon with The San Antonio Orthopaedic Group in Texas. He is also clinical assistant professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and is a past president of the Arthroscopy Association of North America. "He is a real innovator and has advanced all aspects of arthroscopic surgery throughout his career."



Brian J. Cole, M.D.

Dr. Cole is an orthopedic surgeon at Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush, as well as professor in the Departments of Orthopaedics and Anatomy and Cell Biology. Dr. Cole is section head of the Cartilage Restoration Center at Rush (Rush University Medical Center). "He is known for his deep understanding of cartilage repair. He is really on the cutting edge of what is out there."



Edward V. Craig, M.D., M.P.H. is an orthopedic surgeon at Hospital for Special Surgery in New York and professor of Clinical Surgery (Orthopaedics) at Weill Cornell Medical College. Dr. Craig is a past president of the ASES. "He is phenomenal. He has a wide breadth of experience and has particularly good interpersonal skills...a fantastic person."



T. Bradley Edwards, M.D.

Dr. Edwards is an orthopedic surgeon with Fondren Orthopedic Group, LLC in Houston, Texas, and a clinical instructor in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at the University of Texas at Houston. He is also clinical assistant professor in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Baylor University, and clinical professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation at the University of Texas Medical Branch. "He is outstanding. He has a very broad practice, but is best known for arthroplasty and for his publications on reverse shoulder arthroplasty. He is a thoughtful scientist."



Neal S. Elattrache, M.D.

Dr. Elattrache is an orthopedic surgeon and director of the Sports Medicine Fellowship at the Kerlan Jobe Orthopedic Clinic in Los Angeles. He is also associate clinical professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Southern California. "He is a leader in arthroscopic surgery of the shoulder and elbow and is the team doctor for the Los Angeles Dodgers. He is truly an outstanding doctor and surgeon."



Evan Flatow, M.D.

Dr. Flatow is the Bernard J. Lasker Professor and Chair of the Department of

Orthopaedics and chief of Shoulder Surgery at The Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York. Dr. Flatow is a past president of the ASES. “He is a talented clinician, scientist, researcher, and educator...he is the whole package. He is especially known for his work on ways of better understanding rotator cuff repair and healing.”



Mark A. Frankle, M.D.

Dr. Frankle is an orthopedic surgeon with Florida Orthopaedic Institute in Tampa and director of the Biomechanical Shoulder and Elbow Research Lab at the University of South Florida College of Engineering. “He is known for reverse shoulder replacement, and has designed his own prosthesis for DJO (it is different and controversial). He is not afraid to go against the tide. He has had such success that other product designers have modified their prostheses to look a bit more like his.”



Leesa M. Galatz, M.D.

Dr. Galatz is associate professor of Orthopedic Surgery and Program Director of the Shoulder and Elbow Fellowship at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. “She is probably on everyone’s list of the best shoulder surgeons in the U.S. She has a deep understanding of the complexities of shoulder problems and will tackle any type of problem.”



Ruben Gobezie, M.D.

Dr. Gogezie is director of the Cleveland Shoulder Institute University Hospitals of Cleveland and fellowship director at the Cleveland Akron Shoulder & Elbow Fellowship. Dr. Gobezie is also head of the Cartilage Transplant Center of Cleveland. “He is a younger surgeon...very innovative and skillful. He does a lot of allograft bone grafting for isolated cartilage lesions through a minimally invasive approach—not many people are doing that now.”



Joseph P. Iannotti, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Iannotti is chairman of the Orthopaedic and Rheumatologic Institute at Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland. He is also co-director of the Orthopaedic Research Center and has a joint appointment in the Department of Biomedical Engineering. Dr. Iannotti is a past president of the ASES. “He is one of the most knowledgeable people in the world on shoulder replacements. As far as how to do complex revisions he is ‘the man’...the court of last resort.”



Jay D. Keener, M.D.

Dr. Keener is assistant professor of orthopedic surgery at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. “He is a very intelligent guy and is doing some great research on rotator cuff repairs and healing—these are prospective randomized trials.”



William N. Levine, M.D.

Dr. Levine is professor of Clinical Orthopaedic Surgery at Columbia University in New York. He is also vice chairman of Education in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Columbia, as well as director of Sports Medicine. In addition, Dr. Levine serves as associate director of the Center for Shoulder, Elbow & Sports Medicine and director of the orthopedic surgery residency program at Columbia University Medical Center. “He is very dedicated to teaching residents, fellows, and medical students. He is a great surgeon, and is very involved with the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) on continuing education for practicing shoulder surgeons.”

**Frederick A. Matsen, III, M.D.**

Dr. Matsen is an orthopedic surgeon with the University of Washington Bone and Joint Center in Seattle and is the Douglas T. Harryman II Endowed Chair in Shoulder and Elbow Research. Dr. Matsen is a past president and founding member of the ASES. "He is not only innovative, but he possesses an incredible understanding of the way the shoulder works. He has trained some of the top shoulder surgeons that are currently in practice."

**Peter J. Millett, M.D., M.SC.**

Dr. Millett is an orthopedic surgeon and partner at the Steadman Clinic in Vail, Colorado. "He is a well-recognized shoulder expert in all areas. He has developed a select practice that includes many high end athletes. He is on the forefront of several advanced arthroscopic shoulder techniques that are used to treat athletes."

**Anand M. Murthi, M.D.**

Dr. Murthi is attending orthopedic surgeon and chief of the Shoulder and Elbow Service at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He is also director of Shoulder and Elbow Research at that institution. "He is a younger generation shoulder surgeon and is someone to be watched. He is a dedicated clinician and educator who has been actively involved with AAOS. He is a tremendous resource to his colleagues."

**Bradford O. Parsons, M.D.**

Dr. Parsons is assistant professor of Orthopaedics at the Mount Sinai hospital in New York. "He is an up and coming surgeon with outstanding skills. He is very conscientious, involved in research, and in the next five years will be at the forefront of the field."

**Matt Provencher, M.D., M.C., U.S.N.**

Dr. Provencher is director of Orthopaedic Shoulder, Knee, and Sports Surgery at the Naval Medical Center San Diego Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. He is also professor of Surgery and Orthopaedics at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences. "He is one of the most influential shoulder surgeons that the military has produced in the last 10 years. He has published more than 100 articles and he is only in his early 40s. His expertise is in managing complex problems that happen to soldiers, including unstable shoulder with bone loss. This is very hard to treat and he is one of the world's leaders in this area."

**Anthony A. Romeo, M.D.**

Dr. Romeo is an orthopedic surgeon at Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush. He is also professor and director in the Section of Shoulder & Elbow at Rush University Medical Center. "He is a consummate technical surgeon and a very good teacher. He is a thought leader in shoulder stability, rotator cuff repair, and shoulder arthroplasty."

**Edwin E. Spencer, Jr., M.D.**

Dr. Spencer is an orthopedic surgeon at Knoxville Orthopaedic Clinic in Tennessee. "He is a phenomenally talented surgeon and a very dedicated scientist. He has worked on the natural history of rotator cuff injuries and tears, and has been involved in the design of innovative shoulder prosthesis."

**John W. Sperling, M.D.**

Dr. Sperling is professor of orthopedics at Mayo Clinic. "He has a very focused practice...he takes on extremely hard cases. He has published more on arthroscopy than anyone else has recently."

**Robert Z. Tashjian, M.D.**

Dr. Tashjian is assistant professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Utah School of Medicine in Salt Lake City. "He is a talented researcher and has done a lot of work on rotator cuff healing and fractures. He has also done research on the clinical evaluation and biomechanics of reverse shoulder replacement."

**Jon J.P. Warner, M.D.**

Dr. Warner is chief of the Harvard Shoulder Service and director of the Harvard Combined Shoulder Fellowship. He is also the current president of the ASES. "He is very knowledgeable, and has pioneered work on nerve problems around the rotator cuff. He has done a lot of research on shoulder arthroplasty, and has published more than most on the kinematics of the shoulder."

**Gerald R. Williams, Jr., M.D.**

Dr. Williams is director of the Shoulder and Elbow Center at Rothman Institute in Philadelphia and professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Jefferson Medical College. He is a past president of ASES. "He is a thought leader and genuine innovator."

**Ken Yamaguchi, M.D.**

Dr. Yamaguchi is the Sam and Marilyn Fox Distinguished Professor of Orthopedic Surgery and chief of the Shoulder and Elbow Service at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. "He has a good grasp on rotator cuff disease and his research has helped us all learn about much more about this problem. He has the largest database on the natural history of rotator cuff tears."

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