

# Unloader<sup>®</sup> Hip Case Study

49-year-old former athlete presents with 9-month history of recalcitrant left hip and groin pain

## Indication

Femoroacetabular Impingement (FAI) with hip osteoarthritis (OA). FAI, also known as hip impingement, is a condition that causes pain in the young adult's hip and is the result of a mismatch in shape and size between the femoral head/neck and acetabulum (ball and socket joint of the hip). Over time, the resulting abnormal contact may cause damage to the structures of the hip joint. Although surgery is often successful, in a setting where there is concurrent pre-existing osteoarthritis in the hip with FAI, surgical correction of impingement may not provide optimal results. In this case, a 49-year-old former athlete presents with a 9-month history of recalcitrant left hip and groin pain (not relieved by physical therapy and joint injections).

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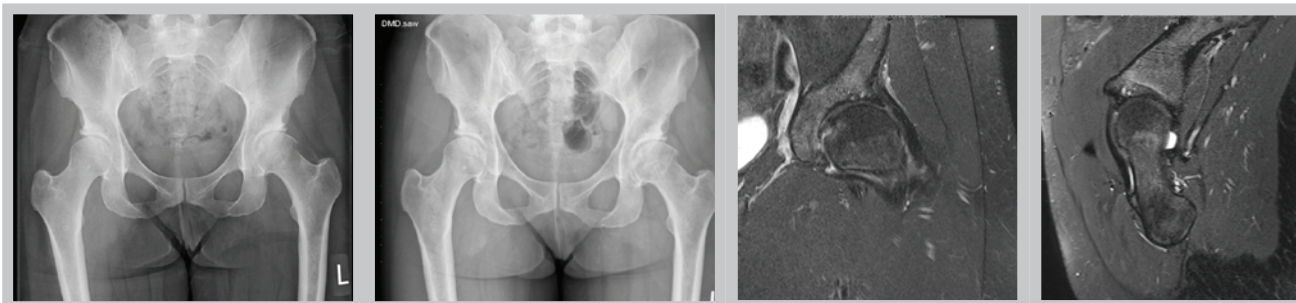
VP of Research: Arthroscopy  
Association of Canada

Scientific Committee Member:  
International Society of Arthroscopy

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Medicine

## Diagnostics

X-ray and MRI confirmed the diagnosis of concurrent FAI and moderate OA.



## Treatment Overview/Goal

In cases where a patient has symptomatic FAI (and no osteoarthritis) confirmed with X-ray and MRI, then surgical (arthroscopic) correction of FAI is the definitive management. However, once there is moderate osteoarthritis and/or degenerative changes present with FAI, a non-surgical approach using a combination of approaches is helpful and can often be definitive. In this case, oral anti-inflammatory medications (short course), physical therapy (including activity modification for 2 months) and the consistent use of an Unloader Hip brace for daily and sporting activities was recommended. The goal is to improve hip function, reduce pain and allow for resumption of an active lifestyle.



UNLOADER<sup>®</sup> HIP

## Reasons to use the Unloader Hip Brace

The Unloader Hip brace was selected for use because it is non-invasive, low profile (fits under most garments), can be used in conjunction with other medical therapies and has potential to improve the mechanics of the hip (improved abductor lever arm function).

## Clinical Outcome

This patient completed a course of Unloader Hip bracing for 6 months with a clinically important reduction in hip pain and improved hip function (felt more stable and reduced pain). The patient also uses the Unloader Hip brace intermittently for sporting activities or activities that involves repetitive hip flexion and rotation such as dancing. The most improvement was a reduction in “start-up pain”, such as standing from a seated position.

## Conclusion

The presence of mild to moderate hip osteoarthritis in combination with FAI, made this patient a candidate for the Unloader Hip brace. In cases of severe osteoarthritis of the hip, then surgery (such as hip replacement) may be indicated. Although the clinical evidence is evolving, preliminary studies do show promise in hip function and pain reduction with Unloader Hip bracing. The Unloader Hip brace may be used in combination with other non-surgical strategies and should be considered in patients with a similar presentation such as FAI and hip OA.

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