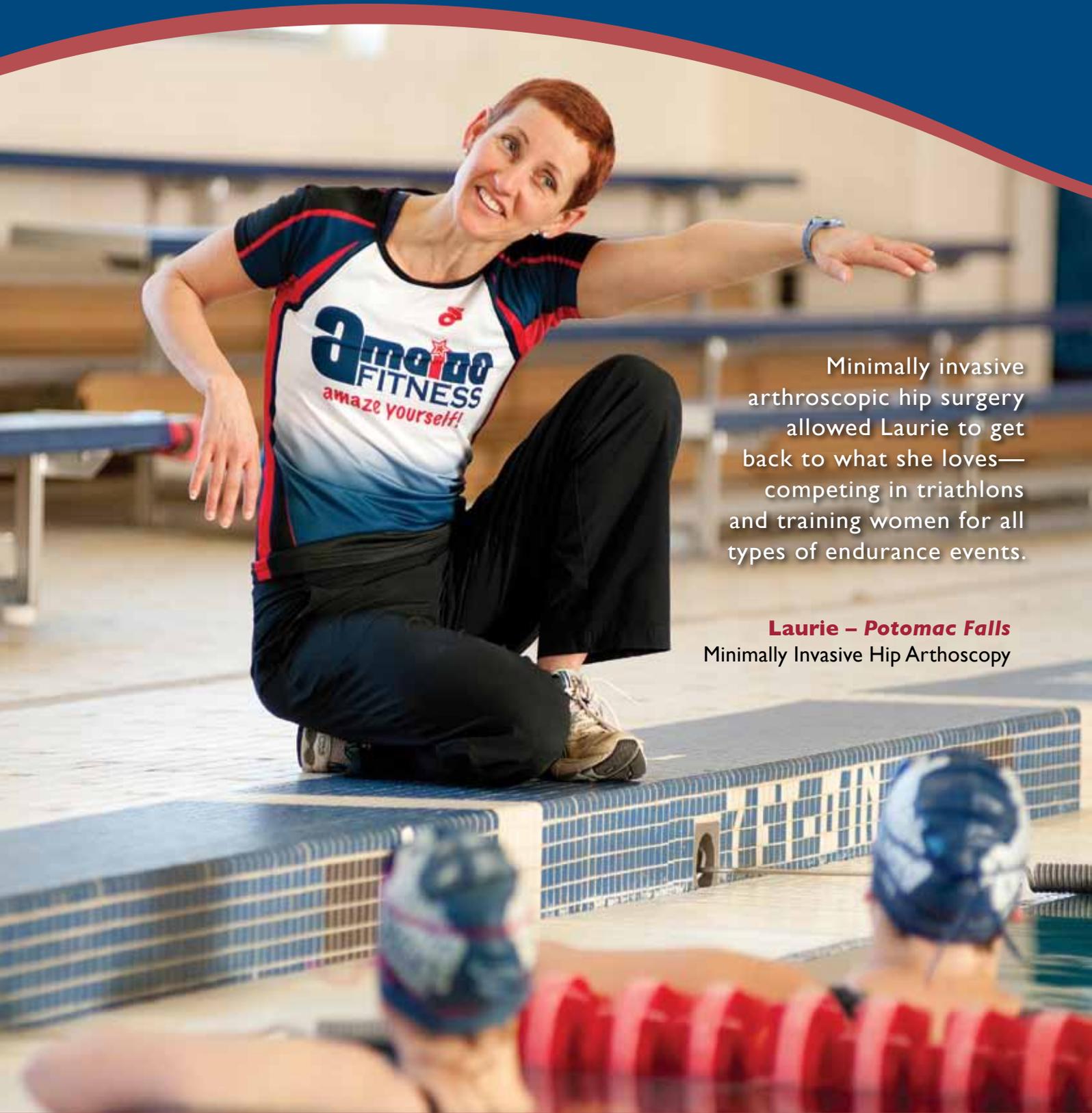


Going the Distance



Minimally invasive arthroscopic hip surgery allowed Laurie to get back to what she loves—competing in triathlons and training women for all types of endurance events.

Laurie – Potomac Falls
Minimally Invasive Hip Arthroscopy

Competing in an Ironman® triathlon is a pipe dream for most of us. For Laurie, it's all in a day's work. The 40-year-old USA Triathlon-Certified Coach and mother of two is the founder of Amaiza Fitness. Amaiza Fitness' tri4women program trains women to compete in triathlons and other endurance events. She is also a competitive triathlete and runner herself. But when nagging hip pain spread to her back and leg, Laurie was forced to hang up her wetsuit, bike and running shoes, and watch her beloved triathlon races from the sidelines.

"The situation was really frustrating, and I spent a year trying all sorts of non-operative remedies to get rid of the pain," she says. "I saw lots of doctors, had lots of tests, went to a chiropractor, tried massage, but nothing really worked." Finally, an MRI with contrast showed the bone needed to be shaved down. A friend recommended she consult Andrew Parker, MD, a Commonwealth Orthopaedics surgeon with special interest and experience in hip arthroscopy.

Dr. Parker offered Laurie two choices. She could have a relatively simple procedure to clean up the cartilage in her hip, or more complex surgery to also shave the bone. The latter would require a longer recovery before she could return to running and competing, but the results would be permanent. Laurie didn't hesitate, telling Dr. Parker, "Get me in ASAP so I can get on with my life." Last June, she had minimally invasive arthroscopic hip surgery at Commonwealth's Outpatient Surgery Center in Herndon.

Arthroscopic techniques have revolutionized hip surgery. Historically, physicians had to cut through connective tissue and dislocate the joint to find and correct the problem. Now, they make a tiny incision and insert a pencil-sized optical device (called an arthroscope) with a video camera attached, which transmits magnified images of the inside of the joint to a TV monitor. Guided by the images, surgeons use miniature instruments to perform the procedure.

"Hip arthroscopy allows us to repair and restore the normal anatomy of the hip joint in a minimally invasive fashion, thereby allowing patients to return to everyday life, recreation and sports much more quickly," explains Dr. Parker. "Commonwealth offers the latest minimally invasive techniques for hip arthroscopy to treat conditions such as labral tears, traumatic cartilage injuries, early osteoarthritis and femoroacetabular impingement, which occurs when the head of the femur does not have full range of motion within the socket. In fact, arthroscopic procedures to treat femoroacetabular impingement may remove a major risk factor in the development of osteoarthritis."

Surgical candidates include anyone for whom non-operative treatment such as pain medication, steroid injections or physical therapy has failed, except those with advanced arthritis.

One of the biggest benefits of hip arthroplasty is faster recovery time. Most patients can begin light activities such as biking or swimming within a few weeks. Laurie was home one hour after waking up from her surgery. She had minimal pain, and was able to walk with a crutch. A few days later she was swimming, and soon she returned to a stationary bike to stay in shape. Four months after her surgery, she was running again.

"I had such great results and Dr. Parker was awesome," she says. "He's one of the leading physicians doing this procedure in the area and he's done it lots of times, so I felt very confident about everything. He was available whenever I needed to talk, and he always encouraged me to make my own decisions. He'd say, 'If you were my sister, this is what I'd recommend,' but he never made the choice for me."

Laurie also praised Commonwealth's Outpatient Surgery Center, which she found more comfortable and personable than a hospital. She was in and out fast, without a lot of waiting time, and felt at ease with the attentive, one-on-one care from the staff.

Her hip pain is gone and her range of motion is back in full. Just eight months after her surgery, she will compete in the 2011 Rohto Ironman 70.3 California – a race that consists of a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride and a 13.1-mile run. She will follow that up with a full Ironman – a 2.4 mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run – in Lake Placid, NY. "My recovery from surgery was amazingly quick and I was back to normal very fast," she says. "People shouldn't hesitate to have this done."



Dr. Andrew Parker, MD earned a BS in Biology and Chemistry from Wake Forest University. Dr. Parker then graduated magna cum laude from medical school at the University of Louisville. He completed his internship and residency in orthopaedic surgery at Northwestern University. Dr. Parker concluded his formal medical education by completing a fellowship in sports medicine at the Baylor Sports Medicine Institute in Houston, Texas.

For full biographies and a complete directory of the physicians at Commonwealth Orthopaedics who perform these and other procedures visit our website at www.c-o-r.com.