

# Building Better Athletes

## Visual Fitness Plays Key Role In Today's Training Programs

(NAPSA)—Nearly 2 million people in the United States will undergo laser vision correction or LASIK surgery this year. While most people will turn to this procedure hoping to set aside their cumbersome eyeglasses or hard-to-handle contacts, some people, like athletes, are looking to LASIK as a way to improve their sports performance.

"Athletes dedicate a lot of time to their nutrition and physical training, but they frequently overlook the way in which poor vision might actually be holding them back competitively," says ophthalmologist Barry L. Seiller, MD, a specialist in LASIK surgery and Director of the Visual Fitness Institute® (VFI).

Dr. Seiller points to some important advances in LASIK surgery that are making the procedure increasingly popular and also safer than it has ever been before.

"We recently installed the new LADARVision excimer laser, the first and only laser eye surgery system that uses laser radar tracking, originally developed for NASA, which actually locks on to the eye and guides the precise placement of a small laser beam," Dr. Seiller explains.

A person's eyes are always in motion, even during LASIK surgery, and just a slight or subtle eye movement during the procedure can interfere with the proper placement of the laser beam, possibly resulting in halos, night glare, or other problems. This new laser sys-



**Improving athletes' visual acuity is a key component of improving overall performance.**

tem measures eye movements at 4,000 per second, which is much faster than the older lasers that use video trackers. According to Dr. Seiller, using this type of tracking system, along with a smaller laser beam, offers a much better outcome for patients.

According to Dr. Seiller, there's more to good vision than just the ability to see clear and far. Other factors, such as depth perception, contrast sensitivity and hand-to-eye coordination, also are very important.

"Visual skills can be trained or enhanced," Dr. Seiller explains. "At the Visual Fitness Institute, we have special programs that can help athletes improve these skills."

Through VFI, Dr. Seiller has worked with many professional and amateur athletes, including members of the U.S. Luge, Bobsled, Ski and Snowboard teams, as well as student athletes from Georgia Tech and minor league

players for the Cleveland Indians and Milwaukee Brewers.

Athletes participating in the VFI program will undergo tests to assess their visual skills, depth perception, visual memory, kinetic acuity, near-to-far focusing and tracking ability. Based on the results of the tests, each athlete is put through an intense visual training program designed to improve and sharpen visual skills.

"The very best athletes are said to have a great field of vision and are credited with the ability to "see the field," while poor visual skills are often blamed for near misses and playing the angles poorly," Seiller said. "I am confident that visual training will become an integral component of all athletic training programs in the near future."

The Visual Fitness Institute® has recently released a CD for anyone looking to improve their sports performance. The CD, named the Vizual Edge Performance Trainer™, features the same tests used on professional athletes, while providing the convenience of training at home. The new CD is available through the Vizual Edge Web site at [www.vizualedge.com](http://www.vizualedge.com). The site also features an interactive demo of one of the exercises for a sneak peak at this innovative training program.

For more information about the Visual Fitness Institute, visit [www.visualfitness.com](http://www.visualfitness.com) or call 847-816-3131. To learn more about LADARVision visit [www.ladarvision.com](http://www.ladarvision.com).