

# Doctor takes his own “medicine”

Dr. John N. Thomas, D.C. known locally as The Running Doctor, had planned a dream vacation. He was taking his mom with him to visit China. He planned to run The Great Wall Marathon, an extreme course with six miles of uneven steps on the wall itself. It would be his second marathon.

“I had been training intensely, like a maniac. I was doing a lot of hill work in preparation. I was doing all of the training and still holding my office hours. What I do is very physical. I had little aches and pains in my back, but passed it off as soreness,” he said.

“I was getting ready to do my fourth long run of 21 miles. I ran the run without a hitch, so I thought. Three hours after I completed it, my back seized up. I was totally analgic to the right. I had a real significant lateral lean to the right. I had severe pain. I couldn’t walk. I couldn’t put on my own underwear. I couldn’t drive,” Dr. Thomas continued.

Dr. Thomas put his treatment on overdrive. At first, he took home electrical stimulation and ultrasound therapy devices. He talked his daughter through how to use it on him. “I laid on ice all day on my back on the floor, upstairs on my floor in total isolation.” He began to question whether he would be able to make his run.

Because of his own expertise as a chiropractor for over a decade, Dr. Thomas knew that he had a bulging disc at L5. He did several orthopedic tests and took xrays.

“I had had the IDD machine for four months. We had treated six or seven patients on IDD. The results were good. I was still skeptical. The patients were saying that they were doing good. It’s one thing to say the patients are getting better, it’s another thing to do it yourself,” he said.

“I tried it out of desperation to get back to running myself. I had a little under a month before I was supposed to leave for China, for the Great Wall marathon.”

Dr. Thomas was skeptical then about IDD. Now he knows how well it works to non-surgically treat the cause of back pain due to conditions like bulging and herniated discs, sciatica and degenerative arthritis.

“I cried the first day on the machine. I boo-hooed like a little baby. Like a six foot 2, 190 pound baby. I was an emotional wreck. Knowing about the possibility of not being able to run in China after all that

training. I tried to stay as positive as possible. My staff kept telling me I wasn’t going to run. I kept telling them I was.”

Every single day, including weekends, for twenty days Dr. Thomas had IDD Therapy, including the full protocol he gives his patients. It took about half the treatments before he had pain relief. Even then, he was still taking breaks and lying on the floor. He couldn’t work for three weeks.

By the end of the treatments things were better, but the big question was China. So he ran one mile. “It was excruciating.” Besides the pain, his time was 12 minutes, when he usually did a six-minute mile. Three days later, he tried again and ran five miles with no pain at his normal nine-minute pace.

After that, he didn’t run again until the marathon in China. On the plane, Dr. Thomas did his best to avoid stressing his lower back. “They probably thought I was a terrorist, because I kept pacing the aisles. For 90% of the 16-hour ride I was standing or pacing. Sitting increases the load to your disc by 3 times. Sitting is absolutely the worst position to be in for your lower back.”

In China, Dr. Thomas toured extensively about the country before the race. He also took a look at the course. “There’s not a marathon on the planet that mandates that you inspect the course prior to running it. They do that because they want you to see the level of difficulty of this course.”

The first three miles of the course are an ascent up the mount to get to the wall, nothing but steps. Some of the steps are more than a foot high, some are only four or five inches high. “There were thousands of steps. You’re hiking up there with your legs up like a Rockette,” said Dr. Thomas.

In spite of his injury, he had a great run. He took pictures of the people and countryside. “It was absolutely majestic. It was one of the most beautiful runs I’ve ever done, until mile 15.”

That’s when Dr. Thomas hit the wall. Not The Great Wall, this was the end of his endurance. “I felt like I was going to die. I didn’t have enough nutrition to sustain me.” He had run out of everything he had brought with him, so he started asking others to share, and they did.

Dr. Thomas even became disoriented at one point, thinking he was running the wrong way. Because 80% of the runners

were from other countries, he couldn’t even ask to clarify. He ran that way for 3-4 miles before finding someone with a race placket like his own.

He found, in the midst of the struggle, that the one thing that kept him going was giving encouragement to another runner, a woman named Franca, from Italy. Together they prevailed through the last ten miles. She couldn’t have done it without him, she said later. And he couldn’t have done it without her. “We stuck together for the rest of the race to pull us through, out of our total desperation,” said Dr. Thomas. “It was, without question, the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” said Dr. Thomas.

Dr. Thomas finished the race in 7 hours, 49 minutes and 58 seconds. He was fifth from last. “We almost got kicked off, because the course closes at 8 hours. I was just shy of 10 minutes in getting disqualified. I was very proud. I yelled the loudest yell. The people all around the finish line started clapping. A film crew came up and told me it was the most enthusiastic finish all day.”

“Franca’s family invited us to Italy, out of thanks for getting her through the race. My wife and I are going to go on our 20th anniversary.”

Dr. Thomas has a message for others who are training and experience an injury or back pain. “Don’t give up. Know that there is something out there that can get you across the finish line in one piece. I cried on that table thinking that I wasn’t going to make it. But I kept the faith, relying on God and the neurosurgeons that developed that IDD table. And I followed the protocol to the letter and more.”

Dr. Thomas never expected to be one of the over 80% of people who experience back pain. But he had IDD Therapy to turn to. He’s a believer, because he took his own “medicine.”

IDD Therapy is clinically proven to give relief to over 90% of the people who need it. With no downtime and no side effects, IDD is an FDA-cleared device for spinal decompression. Dr. Thomas’ office, Allied Healthcare Clinic, is the only local certified and licensed provider of IDD Therapy.

For a free consultation, call 770-460-1911. For more information visit [runningpainfree.com](http://runningpainfree.com) or [proven-back-pain-relief.com](http://proven-back-pain-relief.com).



## Allied Healthcare Clinics

**WHAT:** As founder of his private South Atlanta practice, Allied Healthcare Clinics, The Running Doctor, Dr. John N, Thomas, D.C., has helped thousands of patients get fast and effective relief from sports and personal injuries without the use of drugs or surgery.

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