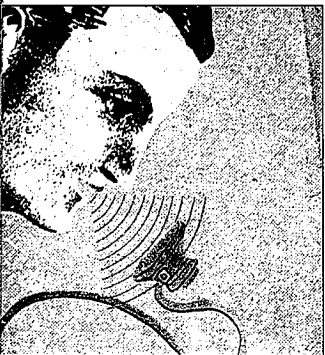


# NEWS

## American Medical

November 15, 2010  
VOLUME 53 NUMBER 21



Business

# Doctor/runner uses bare foot as shoe model

**Name:** Mark Cucuzzella, MD

**Location:** Shepherdstown, W.Va.

**Company:** Two Rivers Treads, A Center for Natural Running & Walking (<http://www.treads.org/>).

**Annual revenue:** The shop opened on May 22, and Dr. Cucuzzella estimates that the store has averaged \$25,000 a month in sales.

**Why he started the business:** Dr. Cucuzzella, a family physician with Harpers Ferry (W.Va.) Family Medicine, has been a runner for most of his life. But as a result, he has sustained numerous injuries.

Foot surgery in 2000 led him to

research ways to run with less impact. He moved away from running in traditional, heavily cushioned shoes with elevated heels to those that mimic being barefoot as much as possible.

Such shoes are being produced by an increasing number of companies in response to the emerging trend of "barefoot" or "minimalist" running. Most look like traditional running shoes, although others appear like gloves for the feet, with pockets for each toe.

Some journals have published peer-reviewed research that says run-

## Business Pitch

ning in bare feet is healthier than using traditional running shoes, though the subject is one of much debate.

"We're not promoting that every runner go barefoot, because a lot are not ready to do that," Dr. Cucuzzella said. "But we can get you as close to barefoot as possible."

Two Rivers Treads hosts clinics on injury prevention and ChiRunning.

which incorporates tai chi.

The store also serves as headquarters for Freedom's Run, a marathon, half-marathon, 10k, 5k and children's run organized by Dr. Cucuzzella at national parks in the area.

**Why he still practices:** "I want to bring the idea of treating the cause of injury and illness and not just the symptoms into our medical home model."

**Words of wisdom:** "Follow your passion." ♦

—Victoria Stagg Elliott

*If you know of a physician with a side-line business who should be featured in this column, please call Business Editor Bob Cook at 312-464-4434 or e-mail him (bob.cook@ama-assn.org).*