



# PUTTING ITS BEST FOOT FORWARD

## Nextremity Solutions Transforming Orthopedics

By **Symone C. Skrzycki**

Primitive and painful. That's how Rod K. Mayer, president and CEO of orthopedic medical device company Nextremity Solutions®, describes a common approach to correcting hammertoe deformities in which surgeons insert a sterilized, stainless steel pin (known as a K-Wire) into a patient's toe.

Ouch!

Nextremity offers a wireless alternative – the Nextra Hammertoe Correction System, a two-piece metal implant designed to increase precision and shorten recovery time. Innovative packaging provides surgeons with the implant and insertion instruments in one sterile kit for single-patient use.

What exactly are hammertoes? It's all in the name.

Hammertoes involve a painful bending of the toe, resembling the shape of a hammer. Approximately 60 million Americans suffer from the condition, although the deformity is most often seen in female patients, many of whom wear constricting shoes such as high heels.

Nextremity's newest product addresses bunions, another painful condition. Its Re+Line© Bunion Correction System debuted earlier this year.

"This is all about lives being changed," Mayer emphasizes. "We provide advancements, techniques and technologies that allow patients to be free from deformities and the pain caused by those deformities."

### Stepping up the game

Orthopedic surgeons Stuart Katchis and Lon Weiner founded

Nextremity in 2008 in Red Bank, New Jersey.

"(The thought was), 'Let's figure out how to make a better product that will meet unmet needs for surgeons and most especially for the patients,'" Mayer describes.

In 2012, the Nextra Hammertoe Correction System hit the market.

The following year was pivotal: Mayer joined the organization and the corporate headquarters moved from Red Bank (research and development still takes place there) to Warsaw (home to management, marketing, financial and sales activities). Nextremity has 15 employees.

"We outsource all of our manufacturing and use some Indiana firms," Mayer remarks. "That's a direction we're going to be looking at more carefully – more opportunities to partner with more Indiana-based manufacturing companies."

Podiatric surgeon Yolanda Ragland is a big fan of the Nextra Hammertoe Correction System. Her practice, Fix Your Feet, focuses on forefoot surgery (mainly hammertoe and bunion correction) and has offices in New York City and Silver Spring, Maryland.

"Unlike most of its competitors, the product is a two-part scheme allowing for each end to be inserted individually and then married, allowing bone-to-bone union," she explains. "Each end of the implant is threaded, which virtually guarantees grip to the bone and ensures optimal implant security."

"As a result of these features, the application process is simple for all hammertoe correction approaches, including my inter-digital approach or what patients understand to be a hidden or inside incision. This approach is key to performing hammertoe correction with an increased aesthetic outcome."

Innovation continues as Nextremity plans to unveil several new



"The Nextra Hammertoe Correction System stands apart from its competitors for a number of reasons. The primary reason I advocate for the product is due to its reliability."

– Yolanda Ragland, podiatric surgeon

products this year.

"In our industry, we're governed by the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)," Mayer comments. "We've already had two 510k approvals (known as a premarket notification) this year, which is unheard of to have as quickly as we have. We anticipate having a third. We're very excited about how rapidly we're progressing in the development of clinical solutions for unmet needs."

### 'Soar with your strengths'

Mayer has spent 35 years in the orthopedic industry. Early in his career, he received leadership training from the late Donald Clifton, a well-known psychologist and former Gallup chairman. He recounts how an inscription in a book Clifton wrote – *Soar with Your Strengths: A Simple Yet Revolutionary Philosophy of Business and Management* – influences his life today.

"He said, 'Keep soaring with your strengths. Your strengths are the ability to identify talent. Keep identifying talent and soar with your strengths,'" Mayer remembers.

That advice is driving plans for future growth at Nextremity.

"Here we are in the orthopedic capital of the world, which is rich in talent," Mayer stresses. "As we grow and expand, we'll continue to find individuals who are talented and passionate in our respective strengths and hopefully employ those individuals."

In turn, Nextremity gives back to Warsaw.

"This town is very important to us," asserts Dave Temple, director of global media and communications. "We try not to just throw a donation at somebody, but to actively be involved with different things in the community. For some, it's the Boys and Girls Club. Both Rod and I go to churches in the area, so for us it's important that we support things like food pantries and missions for the homeless."

Mayer concludes, "I've never been more excited (about) serving in a leadership role in a company that's as committed to addressing these unmet clinical needs alongside – and serving – surgeons. That's what this company is all about."

**RESOURCES:** Rod K. Mayer and Dave Temple, Nextremity Solutions, at [www.nextremitysolutions.com](http://www.nextremitysolutions.com)

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