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Summer Olympics Invitation Rubs Ishman the Right Way

By Jennifer Slykas

Ishman is one of approximately 130 massage therapists selected from a field of 14,000 applicants who will provide sports massage therapy at the games. This year is the first time massage therapy has been included as an official Olympic medical service. Ishman works locally as a massage therapist and has assisted the Chicago-based ChiTown Badminton Team that competed in the 1995 National Badminton Competition in Atlanta. "Working at that competition really provided me with the contacts I needed in Atlanta

I think those contacts and the work I did was a tremendous help for me to be asked to work at the games," she said. Having established a practice in Naperville and Glen Ellyn, Ishman will travel to Atlanta on July 19 to provide preventative methods of massage to the athletes she is assigned.

"I believe the best coach is the athlete himself, and I try to provide a training schedule that coordinates with the information they give me to try to prevent any injuries that could occur and require massage," Ishman said. "This makes my job easier and the athletes' competition better."

Ishman said nearly 75 percent of the time, a person's injury is caused by a structural imbalance, which includes muscle overuse, impact injuries, genetic predisposition and sometimes improper nutrition.

In addition to having 708 hours of formal training from Seattle Massage School, Ishman is a therapist who has played nearly every sport she encounters with her clients. "I have had carpal tunnel syndrome, stress headaches, whiplash and chronic pain. I have that experience that helps me understand what the athletes are talking about, and that will be a tremendous help in Atlanta."

Despite her upcoming work at the Olympics and her local success, Ishman did not always intend to become a therapist. "I wanted to become a lawyer," Ishman said. "I went to Seattle for a political campaign job, but when I was there, I came upon massage therapy. For years, I had been giving massages to get massages — so it seemed that I had always been interested. It took Seattle for me to become focused."

Ishman, who is a member of the American Massage Therapy Association and a Certified Personal Trainer, said, after the games she wants to continue to work with her local practice. "I have lived in Glen Ellyn since I was 9 years old, and this is an area I am not ready to leave yet. Maybe someday I will work more nationally, but right now I am really enjoying business here." Ishman does have plans to continue her education by achieving a myofascial doctorate degree as well as write a book on stretching techniques. "The degree and the book are just a couple more things to add to my plate, but I am excited about everything in my future."

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