Dr. Erik C. Nilssen is the founder of the Nilssen Orthopedics Ankle and Foot Centers. Dr. Nilssen’s Gulf Breeze location is the very first free standing clinic established within the United States that is dedicated to Orthopaedic Sports Medicine centering around foot and ankle care.

As the guiding force behind the center, Dr. Nilssen is passionate about providing the individuals in and around Pensacola, and Gulf Breeze, Florida with a caring, compassionate medical team at innovative centers specifically designed with patient comfort in mind. Furthermore, he is consistently working towards making the Nilssen Orthopedics Ankle and Foot Centers the top centers of their kind in the world.
High Quality Medical Care Should Be Affordable

More expensive does not necessarily mean better: Dr. Erik C. Nilssen is an “Andrews Trained” Orthopedic Surgeon. Dr. Nilssen completed his Foot and Ankle Fellowship, and his Sports Medicine Fellowship at the American Sports Medicine Institute (ASMI): He is the only individual who had the pleasure of completing both of his Fellowships under the direction of the most recognized Orthopedic Surgeon in the world, Dr. James R. Andrews. Dr. Nilssen is Board Certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgeons.
**Education:**

Dr. Nilssen graduated from Auburn University in 1996 (cum laude). In 2002, he completed his stint at USF School of Medicine and went on to McGill University to achieve his orthopedic residency, which he completed in 2007.

**Personal Life:**

Dr. Nilssen has resided in Gulf Breeze, Florida since 2009. He and his lovely wife, Allison, have two sons, Malloy and Stellan, as well as a beautiful baby girl, Emyrson. Dr. Nilssen enjoys spending time with his family at the beach and boating. He is also passionate about college sports where he serves as a Team Physician for Auburn University Athletics.

**Dr. Nilssen, the Mentor**

Today, Dr. Nilssen is happy to participate in the education of Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Physicians through the Andrews Research and Education Foundation (AREF). This program gives him the opportunity to mentor Foot and Ankle, and Sports Medicine Fellows. Dr. Nilssen is dedicated to sharing his knowledge and skills with these medical professionals to provide them with the information they need to serve their patients with the highest quality of care possible.
Engaging with the Community

Dr. Nilssen serves as Medical Director for EXOS Gulf Breeze (formerly Athletes’ Performance), and consults with Under Armour Innovation Team, the Pensacola Wahoos, Pensacola State Junior College, West Florida University athletic teams. Dr. Nilssen also consults for numerous professional teams throughout the NBA, NFL, MLB and Olympic Sports.

Dr. Nilssen serves as Chairman of Staff Parrish Relations Committee at Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church.
Ensuring Quality Care at Nilssen Ankle and Foot Center

The dedication and compassion of Dr. Nilssen, and his staff are evident in that they actively measure patient outcomes to ensure each patient receives the top quality care they deserve.

An Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Specialist vs. a Podiatrist - What is the Difference?

The ankles and feet are part of the very complex human skeletal system. The foot itself is comprised of 33 joints, 26 bones and more than 100 tendons, ligaments and muscles. Due to the complexity of the foot and ankle, becoming an expert in this field usually takes years of education, training and practice. While some may believe that an Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Specialist, and a Podiatrist are one in the same, this is not the case. Prior to seeking care for the foot and/or ankle, it is imperative that individuals know the difference between these two professionals.
The Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Specialist/Surgeon

One of the biggest differences between an orthopedic foot and ankle specialist/surgeon, and a podiatrist is the level of education and training required. It takes much longer to attain a license and become certified as an orthopedic foot and ankle specialist than it does to become a podiatrist. Specifically, orthopedic training entails operative intervention in spine, sports medicine, pediatrics, tumor, joint reconstruction, hand, foot and ankle. An orthopedic surgeon must attain Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree to become licensed and board certified. The main benefit of choosing an orthopedic specialist/surgeon over a podiatrist is the surgeon’s ability to take a full body approach when diagnosing and then treating a condition or injury.

The Podiatrist

A podiatrist usually treats common foot ailments. These ailments include heel spurs, calluses, fallen arches, ingrown toenails, foot injuries (minor). In general, podiatrists are not trained to address issues related to the muscles, ligaments, soft tissues, bones and tendons of the foot, ankle, and/or lower leg. The podiatrist does not obtain an MD and receives a degree in Podiatric Medicine (DPM). However, a podiatrist is well-equipped to provide individuals with custom-made shoes, braces and orthotics. Many states don’t allow podiatrist to operate above the foot.
Common Reasons Individuals Choose an Orthopedic Surgeon Instead of a Podiatrist

An orthopedic surgeon is a medical doctor; whereas, a podiatrist is not. As an MD, an orthopedic surgeon specializes in diagnosing, preventing, treating and rehabilitating diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system. While many orthopedic surgeons practice general orthopedics, some also become pediatric specialists, or have expertise in treating the spine, hand, knee, shoulder, sports-related injuries, as well as issues related to the ankle and the foot. Dr. Nilssen is an orthopedic surgeon who specializes in treating sports-related injuries and conditions affecting the ankle, and the foot.

Tips for Choosing an Orthopedic Specialist/Surgeon

Choosing the right orthopedic specialist is essential to ensuring the fastest recovery possible. When an individual considers seeking treatment from an orthopedic specialist for an injury or condition related to his or her foot and/or ankle, taking the time to research the options available is crucial. Before scheduling an appointment, interview the specialist by examining his or her bio: Areas of particular interest should be education, residency, specialties and experience treating the injury/condition for which treatment is needed.
Individuals with repetitive motion injuries or traumatic injuries to a nerve, bone, joint or tendon should consider contacting one of the Nilssen Orthopedics Ankle and Foot Centers in Florida. As an orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Nilssen has the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to help individuals who have sports-related injuries, chronic (long-lasting) joint or bone pain, rheumatic disease and arthritis.

Dr. Nilssen focuses on patient outcomes through analyzing research, training Fellows 1-year post residency in Orthopedic Foot and Ankle, and consistently evaluating his patients’ experiences.
Nilssen Orthopedics in Gulf Breeze and Pensacola, Florida

Nilssen Orthopedics Ankle and Foot Center offers three locations, one center is located at The Andrews Institute in Gulf Breeze and the other two are located in Pensacola.

The Andrews Institute location specializes in research as well as multidisciplinary medical treatments focusing on foot and ankle disorders, and injuries related to sports. This location also concentrates on assisting athletes in injury prevention, rehabilitation and improved athletic performance. Dr. Erik C. Nilssen treats both elite athletes and non-athletes for issues related to the foot and ankle. When necessary, Dr. Nilssen also performs foot and ankle surgeries at this location.
Dr. Nilssen’s Clinics Are Easily Accessible

With three convenient locations, individuals in need of treatment can be seen within 24-48 hours.

The Andrews Institute Location:

1040 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Suite 208
Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561
(850) 435-4800

The Pensacola Locations:

825 E Burgess Road,
Pensacola, Florida 32504
(850) 435-4800

4012 N 9th Ave.
Pensacola, Florida 32503
(850) 435-4800

In addition, individuals can schedule an appointment on the Nilssen Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Centers’ website.
The Best of Both Worlds – Standard and Advanced Imaging Options

O-Scan MRI

Patient comfort, quality, overcoming economic challenges and efficient workflows to limit exam times are fundamental requirements in today’s healthcare scenario. The Innovative O-scan magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine is the perfect response to all of these issues.

The O-scan is specifically designed for examining the extremities; thus, making it the perfect piece of equipment for orthopedic specialists. The O-scan MRI is a high-tech system that provides patients with extremity injuries and/or conditions a comfortable option to the traditional tunnel-like MRI machine.

What seperates the O-scan from traditional hospital based MRI imaging is price, comfort, and convienence. No sedation is needed for those patients who are clostophobic. The cost is controlled by Dr. Nilssen allowing all patients access to an MRI.
Weight Bearing Computed Tomography (CT) Scanner – The pedCAT

The pedCAT is a compact, extremely low-dose weight bearing CT scanner that allows Dr. Nilssen and his colleagues to attain bilateral, weight bearing, three-dimensional (3D) views of a patient’s foot and ankle. Once a patient’s CT is complete, Dr. Nilssen and his staff will have the information they need to create the patient a comprehensive treatment plan.

**Point-of-Care Provides Convenience**

The ability to complete advanced diagnostic imaging on-site is beneficial to Dr. Nilssen and to his patients. The scan time for both feet with the pedCAT is merely 60 seconds and only 20 seconds for a partial, single foot. During that minimal amount of time, pedCAT generates all standard X-Ray views as well as the full CT volume. Furthermore, patients are exposed to much less radiation (1000 times less) than they would be during a hospital CT scan. The scan results are available in less than three minutes.
Hospital Pricing vs. Private Practice Pricing

Healthcare today focuses on cost, quality and accessibility. In this healthcare era, an independent physician has an edge: that edge is value. Private payors and the government have tasked healthcare providers with trimming costs and making their pricing practices more transparent. As private practices and hospital systems compete, patients need to determine which providers offer quality care at reasonable prices.

In general, hospitals charge more than independent physicians do for identical procedures. When a patient receives services at a hospital, facility fees are involved; however, an independent practitioner’s office does not charge a facility fee.

Imaging Costs

MRIs, CT scans and X-rays can be very expensive. The sharp rise in co-pays and deductibles places a financial burden on the patient. The majority of people do not realize that they have options and the fees charged for these diagnostic procedures vary greatly.

Hospitals are usually the most expensive option, sometimes charging up to 10 times the amount of a freestanding diagnostic
center or a private physician’s office. Unfortunately, many patients are not aware of the exorbitant costs associated with attaining imaging services at a hospital until the bill for these services arrives in the mail. The same principles ring true for physical therapy and other healthcare services.

Many people compare prices online when purchasing everyday products; however, when it comes to health care services, they neglect to perform a price comparison. Taking the time to compare prices for diagnostic tests like MRIs and CT scans can save thousands of dollars. For example, MRI’s at local hospital owned imaging centers can cost $2000-$3000 per scan, whereas private imaging centers cost $450-$650 for the same scan. Similar disparities exist in nearly every part of the country, including Pensacola, Florida.
Key elements in understanding medical billing are physician charges, anesthesia bill, facility fee, and implant costs. Below serves as a comparison and illustration between Medicare fee scheduled payments to Physicians and facility fees. It is incredibly important to understand the difference in costs between your surgical location: an ambulatory surgery center owned and operated by Physicians (Ambulatory Surgery Center), a hospital location in which the patient goes home same day of surgery (Hospital Outpatient Coding), and a hospital location in which the patient is admitted overnight (Hospital Inpatient Diagnosis Related Group - DRG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Physician Payment</th>
<th>Physician Owned Center</th>
<th>Hospital Out-Patient</th>
<th>Hospital In-Patient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achilles Repair</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$2,318</td>
<td>$4,227</td>
<td>$9,031</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In-Network vs. Out-of-Network

In-Network Providers

An in-network provider is a provider who has a contract with a given insurance company. The contract between the provider and the company states how much money the provider may charge patients who are covered by that particular insurance company. This agreement is referred to as a contracted rate. This rate includes the insurer’s and patient’s shares. The patient’s portion is determined by the specifics of his or her insurance policy.
Out-of-Network Providers

An out-of-network provider refers to a provider who does not have a contract with a given insurance company. When a patient decides to seek healthcare services from a provider that is out of his or her network, the insurance usually requires the patient to pay a higher copayment amount, deductible and coinsurance.

Typically, seeking care from an out-of-network provider is more expensive than staying within the network; however, there are several reasons individuals choose to go out-of-network, for example:

- An individual who has leukemia may want to receive treatment from an out-of-network cancer center specializing in leukemia.
- Some patients unknowingly receive referrals to specialists who are not in their network from their in-network physicians.
- An individual who sustains injuries while participating in a sporting event may choose to go out of his or her network to obtain care from a specific specialist or clinic.

Ultimately, it should be up to the patient whether he or she receives in-network, or out-of-network care.
Tips for preventing surprises related to healthcare costs:

- When being referred, request a referral to an in-network provider.

- When preparing to undergo a complex procedure (i.e., surgery), make sure that all of the health care providers (i.e., anesthesiologists, radiologists, etc.) are contracted with the insurance company. The physician performing the procedure can generally investigate this for the patient. If necessary, changes can be made.

- Contact a new facility, hospital or physician prior to scheduling an appointment to ensure they are contracted with the insurance provider’s network.

Individuals who do choose to go out-of-network need to inquire as to how much he or she will be charged for the visit. Then, the patient should contact his or her health insurance company to find out what portion of the costs the plan will cover, if any.
The Nilssen orthopedic ankle and foot center at two locations in Pensacola, and a satellite location at The Andrews Institute, is a multi-disciplinary medical treatment and research facility specializing in all ankle and foot disorders, sports injuries, prevention, rehabilitation, and athletic performance.

We aim to offer the same standard of care to all people whether or not they are involved in recreational exercises, dance, or sports – no matter what level. This continuum of care approach means you have easy access to all aspects of our team, ensuring your injury be treated from the time of diagnosis through full rehabilitation.

The Nilssen Orthopedic Team is here to empower our patients to live pain free through technology, research, science, and patient-focused care. This Center sets itself apart by redefining quality and providing value-based care in a dynamic healthcare environment.