

10 Things Most People Don't Know About Chiropractic

1. Pain is the last symptom of dysfunction. A patient's back is often restricted or unstable for months or years before it presents as a problem and they show up in a chiropractor's office. In addition, the absence of pain is not health. While medication may be needed, if you take a pill and the pain goes away, the dysfunction that caused it still persists. Muscle, ligament and joint injuries often occur as a result of long-term biomechanical dysfunction, sometimes from past injuries, making the area more susceptible to future injury.

2. Athletes use chiropractors to stay well and perform better, not just for the occasional injury.

Athletes choose chiropractors because we are movement specialists. Chiropractors were spotted all over the Olympic coverage last year, and top athletes such as Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Michael Phelps, Tom Brady, Evander Holyfield, and Arnold Schwarzenegger have all been proud patients of chiropractors. These days it's far more common than not for major athletes and sports teams to keep chiropractors nearby to help prevent injuries, speed injury recovery, improve balance and coordination, and give them a greater competitive edge.

3. The body does not perform as a cluster of separate mechanisms, but rather a cascade of events that all starts with proper control by the nervous system.

The nerves that travel through and control every function of your body originate at the spinal cord and their transmission may be disrupted if the joints of the surrounding spinal column are not moving properly. This disruption in biomechanical integrity combined with altered physiological function is what chiropractors call a subluxation. Below is a chart that illustrates the relationship of the spinal nerves exiting the vertebra branching off to the various organ systems. You can see why it is not uncommon for a chiropractor to treat a patient with mid-back pain who also suffers from irritable bowel system, a patient with a subluxated sacrum who has been unsuccessfully trying to become pregnant, or a patient with an upper back fixation and acid reflux.

Spinal Nerve Function

Every Cell of Your Body Has a Nerve Component

VERTEBRAL LEVEL	NERVE ROOT*	INNERVATION	POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS
C1	C1	Intracranial Blood Vessels	Headaches • Migraine Headaches
C2	C2	• Eyes • Lacrimal Gland	• Dizziness • Sinus Problems
C2	C2	• Parotid Gland • Scalp	• Allergies • Head Colds • Fatigue
C3	C3	• Base of Skull • Neck	• Vision Problems • Runny Nose
C4	C4	Muscles • Diaphragm	• Sore Throat • Stiff Neck
C5	C5	• Neck Muscles • Shoulders	• Cough • Croup • Arm Pain
C5	C6	• Elbows • Arms • Wrists	• Hand and Finger Numbness
C6	C7	• Hands • Fingers • Esophagus	or Tingling • Asthma • Heart
C7	C8	• Heart • Lungs • Chest	Conditions • High Blood Pressure
T1	T1	Arms • Esophagus	Wrist, Hand and Finger
T1	T2	• Heart • Lungs • Chest	Numbness or Pain • Middle Back
T2	T3	• Larynx • Trachea	Pain • Congestion • Difficulty
T3	T4		Breathing • Asthma • High Blood
T4	T5	Gallbladder • Liver	Pressure • Heart Conditions
T5	T6	• Diaphragm • Stomach	• Bronchitis • Pneumonia
T6	T7	• Pancreas • Spleen	• Gallbladder Conditions
T7	T8	• Kidneys • Small Intestine	• Jaundice • Liver Conditions
T8	T9	• Appendix • Adrenals	• Stomach Problems • Ulcers
T9	T10		• Gastritis • Kidney Problems
T10	T11	Small Intestines • Colon	
T11	T12	• Uterus	
T12	T12	Uterus • Colon • Buttocks	
L1	L1	Large Intestines	Constipation • Colitis • Diarrhea
L2	L2	• Buttocks • Groin	• Gas Pain • Irritable Bowel
L3	L3	• Reproductive Organs	• Bladder Problems • Menstrual
L3	L4	• Colon • Thighs • Knees	Problems • Low Back Pain
L4	L4	• Legs • Feet	• Pain or Numbness in Legs
L4	L5		
L5	L5		
	S	Buttocks • Reproductive	Constipation • Diarrhea • Bladder
	A	Organs • Bladder	Problems • Menstrual Problems
	C	• Prostate Gland • Legs	• Lower Back Pain • Pain or
	R	• Ankles • Feet • Toes	Numbness in Legs
	A		
	L		

REFERENCES:
 Fox, J. D., Ph.D. *Neuroanatomy*, 3rd Edition, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2002.
 Kundel, S.R., Schwartz, J.M., Jost, T.P. *Principles of Neural Science*, Appendix 6, Lippincott, 1991.
 Hoesel, S. M.D. *Physical Examination of the Spine and Extremities*, Appendix, Lippincott, 1976.
 Nelson, T.H. M.D. *The Case Collection of Medical Illustrations, Vol. 1, Nervous System, Part 1, Anatomy and Physiology*, Ciba Pharmaceuticals Division, Chugg, 1961.

4. Doctors don't do the healing.

Sorry to disappoint you, but a chiropractor will never fix your back. What we are able to do is restore proper motion in the joints, which relieves tension on the nerves and muscles and allows your body to do the healing that it is inherently made to do. As chiropractors, we believe that the body is a perfect organism in its natural state, and all disease comes from a disruption in the body's proper transmission of signals by the nerves which affects its ability to heal and to defend against disease-causing agents. We never treat disease. We assess to find which spinal levels are causing the disfunction, and we adjust it to restore proper nerve flow so the nervous system may work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

5. Chiropractic is for all ages. Many seniors aren't aware of the benefits of chiropractic care which can help them not only with pain relief, but also increase range of motion, balance and coordination, and decrease joint degeneration. There's no patient too young for chiropractic either! Chiropractors check infants moments after birth for misalignments of the upper vertebrae that may occur as a result of the birth process. In addition to supporting overall health and well-being, parents also take their children to chiropractors to encourage healthy brain and nervous system development, to assist with colic, asthma, allergies, bed-wetting and sleeping problems, and to assist with behavioral disorders.

6. We know about more than your backbone! This surprises many people who had no idea that chiropractors give advice on nutrition, fitness, ergonomics and lifestyle, screen for conditions unrelated to the musculoskeletal system and refer out to other practitioners when necessary. Chiropractors are also able to complete specialties in other areas such as pediatrics, sports rehabilitation, neurology, clinical nutrition, and addictions and compulsive disorders.

Other than particular specialties and the differences in learning to adjust and learning to prescribe medication, our training hours are not dissimilar from that of medical doctor. The following are the classroom hours for basic science requirements compiled and averaged following a review of curricula of 18 chiropractic schools and 22 medical schools.

D.C.	Minimum Hours	M.D.
456	Anatomy/Embryology	215
243	Physiology	174
296	Pathology	507
161	Chemistry/Biochemistry	100
145	Microbiology	145
408	Diagnosis	113
149	Neurology	171
56	Psychology/Psychiatry	323
66	Obstetrics & Gynecology	284
271	X-ray	13
168	Orthopedics	2
2,419	Total Hours	2,047

7. Successful chiropractic patients accept responsibility. When somebody says that they tried chiropractic and it didn't help, I cringe and get the feeling that they really missed the boat. Of course, there are cases with complicating factors, but I have heard this from people with straightforward chiropractic problems when it is very clear what has happened here. In most cases, one doesn't acquire back pain over night, and it's not going to go away over night. If a weak core from years of sitting at your desk is to blame for the additional stress on your joints, I would expect an adjustment to provide relief, but once the condition is no longer exacerbated, I would most definitely prescribe some exercises for you to do at home. I might also suggest we evaluate your nutrition if I suspect an inflammatory diet may be wiring you for pain. Sure, I'm always happy to adjust someone, but if you've been given homework and you don't do it, remember that this has to be a team effort!

8. Chiropractic may help you get sick less. Studies have indicated that adjustments consistently reduce the production of pro-inflammatory mediators associated with tissue damage and pain, and may also enhance the production of immunoregulatory complexes important for healthy immune system defense. As far back as the deadly flu pandemic of 1917-1918, chiropractors noticed that their patients seemed to have fewer fatalities than among the general population and were able to publish their work in an osteopathic journal since no scholarly journals were accepting chiropractic data. The estimated death rate among patients of conventional medical care in the U.S. was estimated at 5 to 6 percent while the fatality rate among influenza cases receiving spinal adjustments was estimated at 0.25%.

9. "I heard I'll have to go forever" is a myth. You may *want* to go to your chiropractor forever once you've started because you didn't realize how great getting adjusted is, but your doctor won't expect you to come for continuous care without symptoms. Generally, if you come in with pain, once you've been treated for your initial complaint, you'll be scheduled for a few more appointments to make sure proper motion is being maintained, then it will be recommended you

return occasionally to be checked just like you would go to the dentist to get checked for tartar buildup and cavities. Of course, many people still choose to see their chiropractor weekly or monthly for wellness or maintenance care.

10. Adjustments don't hurt. There is no bone snapping or warrior-style pulling heads off spinal columns! The neck adjustment some chiropractors use causes anticipation for many new patients, but is actually much more gentle than they imagined, and involves a quick, direct thrust to a specific spinal bone. The sound an adjustment makes is called a cavitation and is only space being created within the joint causing gasses to be released from the joint capsule, which creates the popping or cracking noise. Also, chiropractic adjustments will not wear out your joints, as some imagine because they have been warned not to “crack their knuckles” for this reason in the past. Adjustments, unlike “knuckle cracking” or having your friend stomp on you while you lay on the carpet, are applied specifically to improve the motion of your joints and limit the small dysfunctions that over time can lead to arthritis. Most people after an adjustment describe the feeling as being “lighter”, having greater ease in moving the body, and being able to stand up taller.

Resources:

omaleydc.wordpress.com

<http://www.yourmedicaldetective.com/drgrisanti/mddc.htm>

<http://www.dynamicchiropractic.com/mpacms/dc/article.php?id=9485>