

The Wellness Express™

Jump on the train to good health

Issue 3, December 2011

GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF CHIROPRACTIC THIS YEAR!

Presented by:

In many traditions and cultures, December is the month of major holidays which include the giving and receiving of gifts. Normally, one would assume this time is only associated with joy and gratitude.



All-too-often, however, this time of year can be associated with a lot of **stress**! Travel schedules, family obligations and unrealistic expectations placed upon us can create stress that builds up as tension in our bodies. This leaves us more vulnerable to feeling aches and pains in our joints or muscles, or succumbing to the ever-present cold or flu virus.

It is not surprising that stress causes tension. But how is it that tension can actually hurt us? If you have ever been the victim of a stressful situation (who hasn't?), you'll probably remember the muscles of your neck and shoulders feeling tight, or maybe you were aware of clenching your jaw or fists? This is

a typical physical response to mental or emotional challenges. How this leads to damage in your body can be found in the relationship between muscles and joints: Some muscles tighten to provide postural support, and others contract and relax to generate movement. Each muscle attaches to at least two different bones, generating relative movement around a common joint. For example, the bicep muscle crosses the elbow joint, and when the bicep shortens, the arm is flexed at the elbow. Muscle contraction places an increased physical strain or load on the tissues, but this strain is used to perform a useful function. Movement of your muscles is coordinated by the messages relayed by nerves coming from your brain. When muscles are not needed, nerve signals are silenced and the muscles return to a **relaxed, resting tone**, ready for when they are next called upon to contract.

When abnormal tension exists in the nervous system (caused by stress), muscles are bombarded by a low-level of nervous system activity – this does not create enough stimulation to cause a contraction, but generates a higher resting **tone**. This higher tone (muscle tightness) not only places an undue amount of strain on the tissues not being used, but it also leads to a greater compressive load on the joints that are coupled with the muscles in question. This is very unhealthy for the joint, as it could convert minor imbalances to major ones, leading to misalignment

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Exercise of the Week

Lumbar stabilization (stage 3)
Plank Position

Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before engaging this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie down on stomach. Then, begin by propping upper body up onto elbows/forearms, with hands together in prayer position. Engage inner abdominal muscles by bringing belly button inward. Keeping spine steady, lift hips and knees so you're resting on toes, creating a straight line from ankles to shoulders.

Exercise: Keeping spine steady, lift one leg 6-8 inches. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 1) If this is relatively easy, try bringing that leg horizontally out to side as far as you can, keeping torso steady. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 2) Switch legs, and repeat. Perform 3-5 sets of this exercise per side. Be careful not to strain lower back.



and subluxation of the joint. If this happens over time, extra pressure can also lead to accelerated joint degeneration – or osteoarthritis.

Chiropractic to the rescue!

Anyone who has experienced a chiropractic adjustment will know what it feels like to have pressure taken off their joints. Instant relief!



However, did you know that one of the **main** reasons why Chiropractors adjust your spine is to help restore proper **tone** in the nervous system? The father of Chiropractic, D.D. Palmer, spoke about this all the time. He described normal tone in the human nervous system responsible for a state of **ease** in the body, and abnormal tone in the nervous system leading to dis-**ease**.¹ When the spine has areas of misalignment, this can cause irritation of the nervous system. These areas of misalignment or irritation are called vertebral subluxations.

Having nervous system irritation is like having extra ‘noise’ in the room when you are trying to have a conversation with someone. This makes it harder to hear the message. As a result, you either have to shout to get your point across, or risk not being understood. In the body, when this extra noise occurs in the spine (from subluxations) this can cause miscommunication in the nervous system, which can lead to dysfunction and pain.

With a well-placed Chiropractic adjustment, vertebrae are swiftly and effectively shifted back in place, taking excessive pressure off the joints and removing the excessive ‘noise’ from the nervous system that vertebral subluxations can cause.

That is why scheduling a visit to your Chiropractor just before and just after the holiday season is perfect timing! It can help facilitate a greater sense of ‘ease’ in the body, making it easier to handle the stress that normally awaits you at this time of year. Or, once you have been exposed to and felt the effects of the stress, your Chiropractor can bring your system back to normal. We can not think of a better gift to give yourself this year!

**HAPPY AND SAFE
HOLIDAYS TO
EVERYONE!**

Quote to Inspire

*“If you can’t change
your fate, change your
attitude”*

Amy Tan

References and sources:

1. The Chiropractor’s Adjuster (also called The Text-Book of the Science, Art and Philosophy of Chiropractic), Daniel David Palmer, Portland Printing House, 1910 (reprint: 1966).

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