

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

Issue 3, December 2013

How to Get the Most Out of Your Chiropractic Care

Presented by:

Introduction

Chiropractic care offers the possibility of profound and lasting spine and overall musculoskeletal health. A chiropractic adjustment by itself can provide a powerful healing stimulus that can help you move beyond your current health concern and enjoy a more active, fulfilling and pain-free life. But there are a few key ways that you can *really* boost your return on chiropractic care. The tips described below are simple, yet effective ways to get the absolute most benefit out of your chiropractic care.

In this edition of the Wellness Express, we'll take a closer look at five specific ways you can support or enhance the healing benefits associated with chiropractic care. Your chiropractor can explain these (and other) approaches in greater detail, so be sure to ask him or her for more info.

Method #1: Stick to Your Treatment Plan

The importance of adhering to your chiropractic treatment plan cannot be overstated. Your chiropractor understands your unique health concerns and will create for you a plan that is best suited to your needs and goals. The treatment schedule of a person injured in an automobile accident will differ markedly from a person who is receiving wellness care. In many cases, it is most beneficial to receive more frequent care at the *beginning* of the recovery period with treatment frequency *diminishing* over time.

Presented by:

The greater frequency of treatments early on in the recovery process helps cut down on the total duration of care. Getting proper care “early and often” may also help prevent long-term complications associated with musculoskeletal health problems (e.g., decreased mobility, reduced joint range of motion, or degenerative changes in your spine). One study, published in the *Spine Journal* in 2004, reports that 3-4 treatments per week for 3 weeks offered low-back pain patients significant relief.¹ This is a fairly typical treatment schedule for patients with this particular health problem (i.e., low back pain), though your schedule may differ.

Method #2: Perform Your Prescribed Homecare Activities

Keeping up with the homecare activities your chiropractor prescribes is an excellent way to ensure that you get the most out of your chiropractic care. The stretching, strengthening, and postural exercises your chiropractor recommends are intended to augment or build upon the treatment gains you experience *inside* the treatment room.



Exercise of the Week

Seated Twist

Difficulty: Easy

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

Start: Seated on a chair.

Exercise: Keeping knees pointing straight ahead, reach around behind you, holding onto armrest or backrest of chair to maintain this twisted position. Relax lower back, breathing slowly and deeply. Hold for 30-60 seconds, and then return to starting position. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



Your chiropractor may also recommend a cardiovascular fitness plan for you that includes one or more endurance-based exercises, such as walking, running, cycling or swimming. Gardening and other household tasks may also help support your in-office chiropractic treatments. The Spine Health website notes that homecare exercises are often helpful in managing acute and chronic back pain, improving low back strength, reducing lost work time and boosting quality of life.²

Method #3: Drink Plenty of Water

Staying well-hydrated before, after and between your chiropractic appointments is another important way to enhance your chiropractic care and overall health. Maintaining proper hydration status helps ensure that your body can perform its tasks - including transporting nutrients, eliminating waste products, lubricating joints and tissues, regulating body temperature and facilitating digestion - at the highest possible level. Drinking plenty of water is especially important after your chiropractic appointment, as it may help eliminate metabolic byproducts from your body that are mobilized during chiropractic and soft tissue treatments. Clear, pale or straw-colored urine is one indication that you are sufficiently hydrated, notes the Cleveland Clinic.³

Method #4: Optimize Your Work Environment for Spine Health

The ideal work environment for spine health is one in which your vertebrae



are properly stacked and aligned. Any aspect of your work environment that places excessive strain on your spinal column (whether it be from sitting for prolonged periods or from performing a repetitive task at an awkward angle) can provoke or irritate an existing spinal problem and cause discomfort. The goal of optimizing your work environment for spine health is not to eliminate spinal movement, but instead to reduce any excessive burden on your spinal tissues that could prolong your recovery or offset the gains you experience in the chiropractic treatment room.

Method #5: Use Appropriate Footwear

A healthy and stable support base is one of the most important ways to get the most out of your chiropractic care. Your feet are your body's foundation and the type of footwear you use has direct implications for the weight-bearing joints throughout your body, including your spine. Wearing shoes that respect normal foot anatomy and honor nature's brilliant foot design can help ensure that any work your chiropractor performs on your spine is long-lasting.

Conclusion

Your chiropractor can counsel you further on these and other techniques to get the most out of your chiropractic care. Performing these simple steps often makes a big difference in long-term spine health. Ask your chiropractor what approaches are best for you.



Quote to Inspire

*"A healthy
outside starts
from the
inside"*

Robert Ulrich

References and Sources:

1. Haas M, Group E, Kraemer DF. Dose-response for chiropractic care of chronic low back pain. The Spine Journal. 2004. Sep; 4(5): 574-583.
2. Spine Health. Exercise and Chiropractic Therapy. <http://www.spine-health.com/treatment/chiropractic/exercise-and-chiropractic-therapy>.
3. Cleveland Clinic. Avoiding Dehydration, Proper Hydration. http://my.clevelandclinic.org/disorders/dehydration/hic_avoiding_dehydration.aspx.

Writer: Marty Hughes, DC
Design: Elena Zhukova
Graphics: Maria Camille Almirañez
Production: Mike Talarico

Disclaimer: Information contained in Wellness Express News™ newsletter is for educational and general purposes only and is designed to assist you in making informed decisions about your health. Any information contained herein is not intended to substitute advice from your physician or other healthcare professional.