



Foundation for
Chiropractic Progress

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR CHIROPRACTIC ADJUSTMENT



35 MILLION

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chiropractic annually.

The popularity of chiropractic care cannot be denied. More than 35 million people in the U.S. visit a doctor of chiropractic (DC) annually.¹ Whether seeking care at a regular check-up, or following a recommended management plan for an acute injury, a recent Gallup-Palmer College of Chiropractic poll reported that 95% of people who receive chiropractic care for back pain describe it as “effective.”²

WHY CHIROPRACTIC CARE FEELS SO GOOD

Patients can feel good about choosing chiropractic as a natural, drug-free approach to support their health and it's no wonder that it works so well. Specific adjusting when implemented by a chiropractic professional affords multiple benefits to patients:

- The restoration of optimal joint function and range of motion.
- The normalization of local nerve function (or even vascular function) for the structures that may be directly impacted by the involved joints.
- The relaxation of muscles adjacent to the involved joint/s. Muscles may spasm to 'protect' an ill-functioning joint and can resume their natural tone when the joint function is optimized.
- A decrease in inflammation when the stress on the joint capsule is resolved.
- A decrease in pain through the release of endorphins at the region of care.³

Many DCs may also couple adjusting with massage or traction techniques that work to relax the body before an adjustment, or may utilize physiotherapy modalities such as electric muscle stimulation, ultrasound or cold laser to aid in healing and retraining soft tissues when caring for an injury.



**RELAXES
MUSCLES**

**OPTIMIZES
JOINT FUNCTION**

**RESTORES RANGE
OF MOTION**

**NORMALIZE
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**DECREASES
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**DECREASES
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LONG-TERM
GOALS FOCUS ON
INCREASING
VITALITY, HEALTH
AND WELLNESS.

MAXIMIZING YOUR ADJUSTMENT

SHORT-TERM GOALS in a chiropractic office typically include increasing a patient's quality of life through pain relief, restoring optimal joint function and reinstating muscle balance. An analysis of cross-sectional data from a National Health Interview Survey of over 34,000 people was published in *Spine*. It concluded that "A substantial proportion of US adults utilized chiropractic services and reported associated positive outcomes for overall-well-being and/or specific health problems."

LONG-TERM PATIENT GOALS focus on increasing vitality, health and wellness with strategies to maximize joint kinesiology, overall strength and endurance so that individuals can preserve functional

independence and continue to thrive. Once patients achieve short-term care goals, DCs want to help them stay that way and move beyond pain relief to enhance their quality of everyday life. Results from the aforementioned National Health Interview Survey reported that over 60% of respondents sought help from chiropractic care because it addresses the cause of their issues and not just the symptoms. 67% of respondents stated that chiropractic improved their overall health and made them feel better. Further, over 40% of participants reported improvements in other areas of their lives, stating that chiropractic care helped them to relax and reduce stress levels and helped them to sleep better.⁴



After your adjustment, you can help keep healthy alignment in your spinal joints by following the home care instructions given by your DC. These may include recommendations such as:

- **ICE/HEAT:** When addressing injuries, and depending on your stage of healing, your DC may ask you to use ice, heat or a combination of them at home during the recovery process. It is very important to follow their instructions closely (eg. if your DC has told you to use ice for 24 hours, then do NOT use heat during that time frame). Ice will reduce initial inflammation, combination therapies increase blood flow to specific areas and heat can be used for relaxation. Your DC will advise you about the timing of how to use ice/heat for your specific case and what stage of healing that you are in.
- **STRENGTHENING** and/or **STRETCHING** exercises for your individual concerns: Whether neck, thoracics (mid-back), low back, pelvic girdle, hips or extremities, your chiropractor is equipped to provide gentle home exercises designed to target particular areas. Diligent follow-through with your exercises will aid you in holding your adjustments, plus, strengthening the involved areas will help make future issues less likely.



In general, all people should try to avoid abrupt twisting movements in the back and neck. Gentle, mindful rotational movements are recommended over fast motions. For low back issues specifically, all people want to avoid bending and twisting while lifting anything...be it a box or a child. Proper form to avoid injury, or further injury, is paramount to prevent issues. For patients with acute injuries, such as a recent sprain/strain, DCs may also recommend a support brace for a given time to allow patients time to recover without risking further insult to their area of concern.



AVOIDING FUTURE INJURY

In addition to home care that DCs will recommend to help you stabilize your adjustments, chiropractors will often give advice on how to avoid future potential problems and diminish the risks that long-term postural imbalance can cause.

- **POSTURE:** Sitting and standing posture can be evaluated along with spinal curves and gait analysis. DCs can provide recommendations on exercises to improve posture and create new habits that can minimize the risk of degeneration in the spine and the likelihood of symptoms like headaches, pain or numbness/tingling.
- **ERGONOMICS:** Lifestyle habits, positioning at work stations and posture during activities of daily living can greatly affect stresses on the spinal joints and soft tissues. DCs can advise on how to properly set up work stations for ideal ergonomics and help patients avoid detrimental or unbalanced lifestyle habits. They may recommend back supports, belts or pillows to better support the spine and can also provide

instructions for the correct ways to bend, lift, push and pull.

- **ORTHOTICS:** Postural imbalances often come from the feet and many patients may benefit from custom shoe orthotics.⁵ Keep in mind that one size does not fit all. When shoe insoles or heel lifts are indicated to support posture or gait, DCs work with manufacturers to take individual foot molds in the office and have the resources to order custom-made personalized products.
- **DIET:** DCs often recommend healthy eating habits and/or supplements that may benefit patients who suffer from unwanted weight, pain due to chronic inflammation, low energy, stress or other concerns.

As you prepare for your next chiropractic visit, ask your DC about strategies to help you maximize your adjustments, or injury recovery, that will benefit you today and far into the future.



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