

The All-Natural Guide to a Healthier You

INTRODUCTION

Natural healing truly can work because it correctly appreciates the capacity of the entire body to heal by itself. Using self-healing managed by your nervous system, reconditioned overall health is the expected result. Individuals who prefer to recover a healthy body without the aid of medications or surgery should certainly consider seeing a chiropractor.

Primarily due to the rise in popularity of chiropractic treatments, more and more people are becoming interested in learning about the benefits of chiropractic care. If you're encountering discomfort, fatigue or even unwanted weight, you can get relief with the help of an excellent chiropractor.

To find a chiropractor, you may try online searches, checking local listings or perhaps scanning the yellow pages. You may even ask friends or family for suggestions or recommendations. You'll probably find many popular places that have chiropractors with all the proper qualifications, like, for example, a Bachelor of Science or a Chiropractic Degree. They could have finished at least five full-load academic years of university or college learning, with units on topics such as Biology, Anatomy, Chemistry, Neurology, Physiology and Manual Adjusting.

Many chiropractors may also be associates of the Chiropractors' Association or the Chiropractic and Osteopathic College. Both of these are important organizations in alternative medicine, as they exist to set standards for professional chiropractors.

Other treatments, like massage therapy and naturopathy, can also be viable healing options. Professional masseuses abound, making it relatively to find a local, experienced massage therapists with the proper credentials and

certifications. In terms of naturopathy, patients may look to the Natural Therapists Association for potential options.

When opting to go the all-natural treatment method route via chiropractic care, "healthy spine, healthier life" is a fundamental, guiding principle. Through a drug-free, spinal health-oriented lifestyle, you can improve your strength and restore your body to wellness. Whenever you find the right chiropractor for you, you and your chiropractor can work together to improve your overall health in a noninvasive way.

Thank you for purchasing this book. It is my sincere hope that it will answer your questions about the benefits of chiropractic care and treatment.

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Chapter 1: Lifestyle for a Healthy Back

Stagnation is not what your body craves. The primary non-cardiovascular circulatory supporter is a strong movement. Biomechanics creates a pumping effect that promotes the movement of fluids in and out of tissues (particularly spinal discs). Your brain is always receiving messages from your body. When your brain receives signals of motion from your body, it does not receive signals of pain. Also, motion-related nerve signals travel on large-diameter afferents (like DSL). Pain goes on small-diameter afferents (like dial up).

When signals start at the same time and travel from some part of the body to the brain, the signal that reaches the brain first is the one that is registered or perceived. In the absence of motion and healthy joint function, you will begin to experience pain. So, keep moving! Step away from the computer, get off the sofa. Dance, exercise, walk, play, run and start moving.

┌ **Drink Plenty of Water**

The vast majority of the weight of your muscles is water weight. The microscopic view of muscles looks similar to how the teeth of a bike's crank fit into the chain. It applies force to put the bike into motion.

When dehydrated, there is less space in the muscle for the actin and myosin (the crank and chain) to move. If these chains and cranks get jammed up into a small space and run into each other, it does not make for smooth, pain-free muscle function.

So, drink no less than half your body weight in ounces. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds (lbs.), you should be drinking at least 100 ounces (oz.) per day of water. Add another 10% if you live in a scalding, humid environment and you're active outside.

Get Chiropractic Adjustments Even When Pain-Free

When you are doing well, it is much easier to keep you well. Chiropractors are specialists in detecting even slightly abnormal neuromusculoskeletal (nerve-muscle-joint) dysfunction before you are even aware there is a problem.

Just as you wouldn't wait to change your car's oil until the engine block has melted, you shouldn't wait until you're in pain to seek chiropractic care (if you can help it). Do your body a favor. Stay well through regular chiropractic treatments.

[Eat Real Foods Regularly

Exercise, sleep and chiropractic care are critical to a healthy back. However, without food, you will not have the building blocks to repair, build and maintain healthy back muscles.

The same applies to every aspect of human function. Your muscles are metabolically needy. Keep them happy and out of pain by feeding them right. Eat no less than the 3 square meals a day. Ideally, add a snack between breakfast and lunch and again between lunch and dinner to stave off hunger and keep your muscles well nourished.

Magnesium: A Master Key

Magnesium is used in over 300 enzyme channels. It is a master key to unlocking muscle tension. I have found that a product called "Calm" works wonderfully.

A word of warning: Be careful not to take too much, or you will need to use the master key to unlock the bathroom door in a hurry.

Here Comes the Sun: Vitamin D

Research supports a link between chronic muscle and Vitamin D deficiency. Clinical evidence reveals that chronic low back pain reduces with Vitamin D in those who are deficient. You may check your Vitamin D levels through a simple

blood test. While you can get Vitamin D from sun exposure, a nutritionist, chiropractor or other medical professional can advise you on the proper dose of Vitamin D supplement (based on your weight and overall health).

Avoid Pro-Inflammatory Foods

Foods high on the glycemic index and foods with high levels of refined sugar promote increased inflammation. Additionally, even healthy foods like fruit can have very high sugar content that may also increase inflammation. So, be mindful of how much sugar you are consuming. That could be provoking your back pain.

[**Sleep Quantity**

Our postural muscles are designed to support weight for hours and hours. But even these muscle groups require rest. More superficial muscles are not meant to support weight for hours on end (like the deep-layer postural muscles).

Therefore, they will fatigue, ache and even emit a tight, burning feeling. See the ASHA link below for its contribution to sleeping soundly.

Sufficient sleep is different for everyone. Regardless of the “right” quantity for you, if you do get sufficient sleep, you should feel rested and ready to go within a few minutes of waking in the morning. If you don’t, you may need more sleep. When no additional amount of sleep positively changes your energy in the morning, call my office. A different issue may be affecting your ability to sleep.

Best Sleep Rules: Sleep Positions, Beds & Pillows

My patients ask me all the time about the best way to sleep, the best beds and the best types of mattress pads. In general, the ideal sleep positions and products will be those that allows your spine, shoulders, and hips to be in neutral positions with the least amount of pressure.

Here’s the best clinical advice I can give:

- [**Sleep how you can sleep best.** If you can't sleep soundly, you won't be getting ideal sleep.
- [**Sleep is when our bodies have a chance to repair themselves.** Therefore, I don't care if my patients sleep hanging upside down by their toes. If they can do it soundly, they will get the benefits of tissue repair.
- [**Many people have sleeping patterns.** So, adopting ideal sleep positions will only matter if you hire the sleep police to monitor your every move. But again, the more neutral you can keep your spine, shoulders, and hips, the better.

[**Have a Good Salty Soak**

Fill a tub with hot water, and add 1 1/2 to 2 cups of Epsom salt to the water (while filling the tub in order to help disperse the Epsom salt). Climb in, and enjoy for about 20 minutes.

One of the five factors of inflammation is swelling (this may be referred to as "Tumor," but it is unrelated to cancer; it just means swelling). Much of this swelling is fluid based.

When we consider the Law of Concentration Gradient, the following is proven. Since there is a greater concentration of salt in the water and water conducts sodium (salt), Epsom salt can draw excess fluid out of the body, thereby reducing swelling and overall inflammation.

[**Don't Rely on NSAIDs (Advil, Tylenol, etc.)**

First, these over-the-counter (OTC) drugs do nothing to resolve or address the cause of your pain. Secondly, these drugs kill significantly more people each year than Multiple Myeloma, Cervical Cancer and Hodgkin's Lymphoma combined.

If your back pain is so persistent that you feel the need to take OTC painkillers on a daily basis, please find a back pain expert. Search for chiropractic neurologists, functional neurologists, chiropractors, acupuncturists, massage therapists, ASHA Therapists and/or other medical professionals.

These doctors can help determine if your pain can be resolved naturally. If not, they can provide referrals to other medical professionals who may recommend other treatment options.

Also, be aware that short-term inflammation is part of healing and can be good. Stopping short-term inflammation via NSAIDs, such as Tylenol or Advil, can contradict the body's innate healing response, thereby creating long-term inflammation (which may result in adhesions and the buildup of scar tissue if left untreated).

┌ **Balance: Stress**

Mental/emotional stressors can affect the back just as much as mechanical stressors. When your “headspace” is emphasized, your body assumes an overall flexed position. Picture the fetal position or an older adult with poor posture. That's a flexed position...not good.

You may do well to schedule some fun time for yourself. Put it on the calendar. Your back will thank you for it, and your head will be clearer. Also, don't view massage therapy as a “special occasion” event. Massage therapy has been proven to cause brainwave calming. Think of it as a necessary treatment for restoring the body and mind. It is a pleasant, healthy and drug-free option that can effectively reduce stress (and promote wellness).

┌ **Office Ergonomics: Your Monitor**

Ergonomics is defined as the study of efficiency in the place you work. Many people believe that ergonomics focuses on comfort and physical support at work.

The reality is that, when you are not distracted by pain, you are more efficient and productive.

There are a couple key areas to start with to enhance ergonomics without breaking the bank. First is the position of your head in relation to a computer monitor.

I recommend having the center of your screen one inch above eye level as you are comfortably seated (or standing if you use a standing work desk). If it's time to buy a new adjustable monitor, search online (using a phrase like "computer monitor arm adjustable") to find the best prices.

[**Office Ergonomics: Your Chair**

Many people spend as much time on a chair at work as they do sleeping. A massive difference is that sitting increases lumbar compression much more than sleeping. This is mainly due to the fact that, when sitting, more weight is stacked in a vertical column, thereby increasing the pressure at the lowest points of the spinal column: the low back and the pelvis.

One way to counter this is by adding support to the curvatures in the spine.

Lumbar Support: What is Proper Lumbar Support?

Good lumbar support will induce the appropriate curve in the low back and help you to easily sit upright. Your chair may be deficient in lumbar support. There are many options for lumbar supports. You may want to go to www.RelaxTheBack.com for ideas of what's out there.

As with beds and pillows, I suggest choosing a lumbar support product that feels good on your back/body. You may experience increased alertness when using lumbar support systems simply due to the lungs being more open and taking in more oxygen (oxygen helps to produce energy).

In terms of arm position, be sure that your arms are in a neutral position at your workstation. A chair that can move up and down is very helpful in finding a more natural and neutral position for your arms.

[**Office Ergonomics: Your Desk**

You might be shocked to know that, on average, those who sit at work die two years earlier than those who stand. If standing all day at work isn't feasible, then consider the following option: a Sitting/Standing work desk.

There are several models available on the market, with price ranging from around \$400 to upwards of \$2500. These types of workstations will allow you to transition from sitting to standing quickly.

[**Office Ergonomics: How Long You Sit**

This ties back to the ergonomics of your desk. Even without a specialty desk, however, it is easy to stand, take a deep breath and stretch your arms up high.

Repeat that twice and back to work you go. Sitting for long durations decreases the mechanical pumping (imbibition) of the spinal discs. This, coupled with weakened muscles, can lead to herniated discs. I recommend that getting up to stretch at least every 20 (or so) minutes. If you're a real go-getter, get up to stretch every 10 minutes.

[**Travel Actively**

Even though much of traveling can involve just sitting around, it can really deliver a beat down on the body. This falls into the category of being stagnant too long.

If traveling long distances by car, plan to take a 2-5 minute stretch break every one to two hours. If traveling by plane, stand and stretch every 20 minutes. Consider trying to get an aisle seat or a seat in the emergency row (especially if you have long legs).

These are probably the most dangerous words your low back can hear. When you have a joint-related problem, pain is the last thing to show up and the first thing to go away.

Symptoms like low back pain begin to be perceived when around 40% of normal function is lost. That's a lot of dysfunction to have before you're finally aware of it. That basically highlights the fact that pain is an awareness tool.

Therefore, when you experience pain, you should know there is a problem. Don't wait to become completely out of commission to follow up on the warning signal your body sends out like a distress flare. Seek care from a back specialist (noted in the "Experts" section of this book).

[**The 10-Day Rule**

This is another rule that's simple to explain and harder to follow. If your back was "tweaked" during an activity (like golfing or gardening, for example), do not resume the activity until you've experienced 10 pain-free days.

Cure "Done-Lop Disease"

"Done-Lop Disease" refers to belly fat exceeding the waistline and drooping over a belt (i.e., the belly has *Done Lopped* over the beltline). Expressions and humor aside, it is worth considering the mechanical force that a large belly puts on the low back.

This weight pulls the low back forward, usually stressing the joints, spinal discs, muscles and ligaments of the lumbar spine. Oftentimes, to counter this force, people lean back. This creates an exaggerated curve in the lower spine, making this region of the back highly vulnerable to pain and structural damage.

For patients with this condition, I recommend getting a fitness and dietary program underway immediately. The advantages will impact nearly every aspect of life.

Chapter 2: Fitness for a Pain-Free Back

[Get Warmed Up

Before engaging in sports or other activities (like golfing, gardening, tennis and canoeing), take some time to get warm and loosen up your muscles and joints.

[Active Sport-Specific Warm Up

Many people equate stretching with warming up. I often observe athletes stretching by holding a position for about 10 seconds or so.

First, for stretching to actually lengthen the muscle, a static stretch should be held for 60 seconds. Anything under 45 seconds will actually make the muscle shorten and tighten. This is neurologically known as a Slow Stretch, which stimulates the cerebellum of the brain to increase muscle tone.

Secondly, static stretching does not usually mimic the actions of the activity that will follow the “warm up”. Therefore, breakdown the movements of what you are about to do, and only work on doing the key foundational moves smoothly and with exaggerated ranges of motion.

Example: If your golfing, start your warm up with a 2 to 3 min. walk. Then, stand with your feet a shoulder-width apart and your arms out to your side, and do full-body rotations. Start with slow, small rotations, and gradually transition to slightly faster, larger rotations. Then, bend slightly forward to more accurately mimic the golf position while continuing the torso rotations.

[Strengthen Your “Core”

Your core is controlled by your balance reflex systems (including the cerebellum, vestibular, muscle spindles, Golgi tendon organs, joint receptors and visual systems). Here are some effective core-strengthening activities:

- [Pilates
- [Medicine balls circuits
- [Balance-related games/exercises
- [Roller skating or roller blading (using in-line skates)
- [Skateboarding
- [Skiing (snow and water)
- [Yoga
- [Dancing.

[**Master the 7 Human Movements**

The human body relies on healthy interconnections of joints, muscles, and tissue for strength and flexibility. Left stagnant, the physique understandably begins to weaken, and excess weight makes exercise uncomfortable.

While many training programs may seem daunting to beginners, it can be encouraging to know that all fitness and movement come from only these seven moves:

1. Push
2. Pull
3. Bend
4. Rotate
5. Lunge
6. Squat
7. Gait (walk/run).

So, if you're just starting out, keep it simple and focus on mastering these basic moves first. When you're comfortable with these, you can consider adding light resistance.

┌ **Primal Pullups**

First, do not stop reading because of the term PULLUP. The pullup is a simple yet still very challenging move. It has been proposed that a new twist on this old move may be the biggest key toward unwinding the devolution of modern posture.

It is evident to see that people in general are having a harder time with gravity relative to posture. Thanks to two major breakthroughs by Primal x7, there is now one single exercise that may be very helpful to relieving or preventing back pain, neck/shoulder pain and possibly other pain.

Breakthrough 1 allows anyone with at least one arm to do pull ups no matter how old, out of shape, how thick or how weak they may be. Discovery 2 is the subtle but distinct neurological triggering to elicit postural tone and anti-gravity reflex pathways.

Similar to chocolate, however, a basic description won't help you fully understand this experience or sensation. If you are (or will be) in the Austin, TX area, come by and get a taste for yourself for FREE. Just call 512.306.9800, and be sure to reference this book to guarantee it's free!

┌ **Balance: Literal**

Practice your balance. Stand on one leg for 30-60 seconds without wobbling. When this gets easy, add arm circles. Rotate your right arm forward 10 times then backward 10 times. Then, repeat with the other arm. Do this on each leg. When it's easy, do the same thing, but try it with your eyes closed. Be in an open area. It's harder than it sounds.

Balance Development: Wobble Boards

A wobble board usually consists of a round wood board with some sphere or half-sphere fixed to its center. Stand on one of these boards, and try to balance. While you may not feel it, there are a tremendous number of leg, pelvic and low back muscles working to keep you balanced on the board. This balancing exercise enhances lumbar stability and security, promoting calmer, stronger muscles. Wobble boards can be found at just about any sporting goods store. For a video demonstration of what I believe to be a great wobble board, visit the link below.

Balance Development: Seated Swiss Ball

I love this exercise because it helps give people a sense of how to consciously shift their center of weight. A Swiss ball is basically a giant rubber ball. They come in several sizes and colors.

This exercise will help you to gain low back awareness and stability while enhancing balance. As work with a Swiss ball, do so on a level floor with plenty of open space. Ideally, practice on cushioned mats. Also, have a spotter standing behind you in case you roll back too far.

Start by having a seat on the ball with your feet on the floor and the back of the lower legs against the ball. Slowly shift your weight back until your feet lift off the ground. Do not push off the floor with your feet; allow them to be lifted off the ground as you shift back. You will likely be very jerky as you are learning. This will become smoother as you gain muscle and balance.

Important notes about Swiss balls:

- [I recommend buying a ball made of thick, strong rubber.
- [Inflate the ball to a very firm tone (so that your fingers slightly struggle to squeeze into it).

In general, here are some guidelines for choosing a Swiss ball:

[< 5'6" tall: Use a 55-cm diameter ball.

[5'7"-6'3" tall: Use a 65-cm diameter ball.

[6"3" tall: Use a 75-cm diameter ball.

Swiss Ball Video Sequence: www.AustinChiropractorLowBackPain.com

Primal Gluts: Strengthen & Engage

The Gluteus muscles (“gluts”) are a large group of muscles that help with the hip extension and forward propulsion in walking and running. They also add stability in side-to-side hip motions, promoting low back and pelvic stability.

The gluts also help hold the torso upright. When these muscles are weak from inactivity or from sitting for prolonged periods, your movement and posture will be negatively impacted. This often results in pain, weakness and limited range of motion. Find out more about how to “turn on” disengaged gluts via the link below.

The Big Four: Hip Extension

Balance Development: Tight Rope

Find a line (like one created by aligned tiles), and walk it like a tightrope. Do it without shoes. If this is easy, then try walking on curbs while keeping your balance. Be careful and watch for cars!

Wall Angels

Even though I live in Austin, TX, I know the motion involved in making a snow angel. The wall angel is the same range of the movement, only you do it while standing and leaning back against a wall.

The exact topography includes the following: with your backside facing the wall, have the back of the head, shoulders, elbows, knuckles, wrist, and butt all

touching the wall. Keep your heels about 12 inches off the wall. Start the snow angel arm action, and try to keep all the body parts listed above touching the wall. Keep your elbows flexed about 90°.

If you are able, continue this arm action upward until your hands reach over your head. If this is very easy, open the angle of your elbows. If this is still too easy, place a rolled up towel along the length of the spine to increase your shoulder retraction.

If it is too difficult to keep the body parts on the wall, that's okay. Just work the range of motion you have as frequently as you can until you improve. Small measurable improvements will be gained about every 8 days.

Trigger reminders: Use your toothbrush to remind you to do your wall angels. Do 1 set of 10 before you brush and 1 set of 10 after you brush. Do this in the morning and evening. Take care of your spinal health while taking care of your dental hygiene.

Stretch Break

Walking Tall

Walking tall (as in not hunched forward) is a great exercise for cardiovascular health and for stimulating the cross-crawl reflex. The cross crawl-reflex is a neurological reflex that helps to elicit muscles in the upper body for better upright muscle activity. This happens when the right arm and left leg are coming forward while the left arm and right leg are going back (and vice-versa). Helping the center of body mass fall through the center of the body helps avoid putting undue pressure on the joints, muscles and nerves. This is more likely to be achieved when the cross-crawl action is intact.

Special note: If you know people (children in particular) who walk with the right arm and leg forward while the left arm and leg go back (and vise-versa), please encourage consult a chiropractic neurologist or an occupational therapist

immediately. This includes toddlers who “crawl funny.” This can be a sign of a serious issue with potentially lifelong consequences.

┌ **Swim: Backstroke & Freestyle**

One of the best exercise options in almost any situation is swimming. There is a neurological reflex called the cross-crawl reflex that helps to elicit muscles in the upper body for better upright muscle activity. Backstroke and freestyle are swimming methods that can release pressure from the low back. The water also provides greater resistance than is experienced via walking/power walking.

Whole Body Vibration (WBV): Strengthen the Bones (for Osteoporosis)

If you ever watch any home renovation show, you may be familiar with the expression, “*This house has good bones.*” This means there’s a strong structure that the entire new home design can be anchored to.

Well, do you have healthy bones? Osteoporosis refers to weak bones cells. Like everything else in our body, we are a use-it or lose-it system. It is part of what I call the N-BAR or the Neuro—Bio: mechanical/chemical Adaptive Response that is innate in our physiology.

This became abundantly clear when the first humans orbited the earth for multiple days. If you’re old enough, you remember seeing the Russian cosmonauts being carried out of the space capsule. Because they were in zero gravity for a few days, there was no demand for their bones to maintain strength. This resulted in these super-fit humans becoming dangerously brittle in just a short time without gravity. The solution was a whole body vibration machine that would apply a healthy dose of skeletal demand sufficient to stimulate bone strengthening (an Anti-Osteoporosis cycle).

Whole Body Vibration (WBV): Strengthen and Lengthen (Tight Back & Hamstrings)

I treat a lot of athletes and a lot of people with low back pain. Many times these are the same individuals. One thing I never get tired of is watching people get more accomplished in a single visit of chiropractic neurology (when compared to weeks or months of other modalities).

My patients are regularly amazed by how fast they can gain flexibility with WBV. If you have a tight low back and/or piano chords for hamstrings, you need to try a passive toe touch hang while on a Vibe Plate. It is the easiest, fastest and most comfortable way to increase strength while significantly improving flexibility that I have ever experienced or come across.

Whole Body Vibration (WBV): Speed of Reaction Time

Consider a tripwire and how it works. The goal is to deliver an accurate response from a particular action. Let's pretend that you have a tripwire hooked up to make a bell ring when it is activated. If the tripwire is set too tight, the ball may go off all the time in an inappropriate way. This may cause nothing but undesirable signaling...a bunch of noise.

If the tripwire is set too loose, the triggering may require way too much stimulation or action to ring the bell. This would fail to alert you to when the bell should have been ringing. Now, consider that the bell is pain and that the tripwires are your muscles and tendons (the connector of muscle to bone). When the tripwire is too tight, there is constant pain even from normal activities. When the tripwire is too loose, the body requires more input before it knows it is being overloaded. This is the case with various instabilities like those plaguing people who repeatedly sprain and strain ankles, knees, shoulders, necks and small backs. WBV is a safe and efficient way to get the tripwire to just the right tension for optimal speed of reaction time.

Chapter 3: Products for Back Pain Relief

[The Primal x7

There has never been a complete training unit like the PRx7 for any and all body types, ages and experience levels. It is the most affordable and usable physical rehabilitation, conditioning, and strengthening tool on the planet. Every single one of my patients uses this before seeing me. It helps get patients muscles loose and warmed up while engaging their core postural muscle groups.

[ASHA Therapy (ASHA mat)

Pain relief and good circulation are just a few reasons how and why this tool is so useful. Good blood flow makes for happy muscles and joints. Happy muscles and joints make for a happy back. Healthy blood flow also helps to flush out cellular pain stimulators & debris (histamines, bradykinins, substance P, lactic acid, etc.).

Despite decades of use in Europe & Scandinavia, this simple tool is virtually unknown in the United States. However, those who do use it sing its praises. From Trey Hardee (world champion & Olympic Decathlete) and other elite athletes to travelers, professional desk jockeys, carpooling queens and doctors, the results are all the same.

How can something so simple be this effective? Well, the research is available on the website below. I prescribe this tool for literally every one of my patients. It works that well.

[Make Your Heat Pack

Create a heat pack with a long 100% cotton tube sock. Fill it with rice, and tie a knot at the open end. Microwave it to a comfortable heat level (then apply as directed in the Heating Tips in the Experts and Therapies section of this book).

Chapter 4: Experts & Therapies

┌ **Chiropractors**

The leading specialists in back pain relief are Chiropractic Neurologists and Chiropractors. There are many disciplines within the chiropractic profession, and all are drug- and surgery-free. Any good doctor should provide you with an actual physical exam, as well as X-Rays (if needed). (S)he should also be able to tell you what the cause of your low back pain is and provide you with a written treatment plan.

Chiropractic Neurologist

If back pain is nerve related, it may involve more than just your muscles and joints (for instance, digestive changes, mood alterations, or twitching of a limb or muscle could be at play). In these cases, you should find a chiropractic neurologist.

Get Chiropractic Adjustments Even When Pain-Free

Yes, you should know this by now, but it is worth including twice. When you are doing well, it is much easier to keep you well. Chiropractors are specialists in detecting even slight neuromusculoskeletal (nerve-muscle-joint) dysfunction *before* you are even aware there is a problem. You wouldn't want to change your car's oil when the engine block has melted. So, do your body a favor and continue regular chiropractic care even after you feel "better."

Massage Therapy

Some people prefer lighter pressure while other prefer deeper pressure. A good licensed massage therapist will be able to adapt to your preference. Also, the therapist may discover areas of muscle tension that you may not have been aware of. This makes massage therapy another great avenue for drug-free, surgery-free relief from low back pain.

Acupuncture

This therapeutic profession is heavily rooted in Eastern principles. Generally speaking, acupuncture works by restoring balance to the body. It is achieved by focusing on the normal flow of energy or Chi. Whereas, in chiropractic treatments, the disrupted energy or nerve flow blockage (subluxation) is resolved via a chiropractic spinal adjustment, acupuncture uses needles to close the electrical circuit. It is no different than how electronics work. A gap in electrical flow/circuit will result in decreased or no function of that appliance. Like chiropractic care, the governing principle is that balanced chi, energy or nerve flow (depending on your semantics) will restore the body's awesome power to heal and recover.

Strapping (Taping)

Ever heard the saying, "*if you can't fix it, Duck it*"? This refers to duct tape and its wide-ranging applications. The biomechanical equivalent for the body is Kinesio Tape. This tool can be used on the body in many ways. Perhaps, the easiest way to describe one of its biggest benefits is the following: Imagine if you could add a supportive muscle to help out an overworked and/or injured muscle. This would help to unload the pressure on the joints and muscles. That is one major use of Kinesio tape.

I have been using this tap for well over 20 years with great clinical results. There are many ways to apply it to relieve low back pain alone. Your chiropractor can do this for you and even teach you how it's done.

WARNING: As I understand it, the patent for this tape had expired, and there are various knock-off versions of Kinesio tapes. The knock-offs aren't that helpful. Do not buy them. I advise ordering this tape if you have the thumbs up from your chiropractor who is familiar with a specific product.

ASHA Therapy

This product has been referenced throughout this book for good reason. It is amazingly efficient, inexpensive, reusable, highly portable, and reliable. It also requires no creams, plugs or drugs.

My low back has a long history. Over the past 19 years, I have used this therapy to help speed my personal recovery from the abusive forces from pole vaulting, bull riding, workouts and the most dangerous endeavor of all, raising three children. Now, my son uses it to subdue his growing pains. The Relaksomat is in my briefcase when I travel, and it's by my bedside at home. I keep one in my truck for long car rides or to use after I do a trail run. And, naturally, I keep it handy at work. I love high-impact simplicity that truly works. The Relaksomat is just that.

Heat, Not Ice

When muscles and joints are not performing well and have pain, they will get better faster with increased blood flow. The blood has the nutrients and proteins required to heal and rebuild the body. Circulation also helps to flush out cellular waste and debris from inflamed and damaged tissues.

Heat increases the circulatory response to the area where heat is applied. The cold will reduce this reaction. While the cold will reduce your perception to pain, it will not aid in restoring the troubled area(s).

***Never use extreme heat, and don't use heat or ice if you have peripheral neuropathy.

Heat Should Be Used for Different Durations on Different Body Parts

- [Low back (dense tissue) 20 mins
- [Mid back (less dense tissue) 15 mins
- [Neck (least dense tissue) 10 mins

- [Shoulders and thighs between 15-20 mins, depending on the thickness of the muscles and fat.
- [Lower arms and legs between 10-15 mins, depending on the thickness of the muscles and fat.

Sciatic Pain: Above All, Play It Safe

The sciatic nerve can send pain from the small of your back, down the back of the thigh all the way to the knee. Pain can continue beyond the sciatic nerve and cause pain even down to the toes. This pain can be severe enough to incapacitate even the toughest of people. I have literally had patients with sciatic pain crawl into my office on hands and knees.

The most important factor regarding this pain presentation is to determine if there is a ruptured or herniated spinal disc. A few simple tests can be done with a proper exam to determine if a ruptured disc is involved. A back expert best performs this review. If there is not a board certified chiropractic neurologist in your area, a chiropractic neurologist or regular chiropractor can evaluate your condition (at a fraction of the cost of an E.R. visit). If there is a disc lesion, an MRI is required. If not, distinct styles of chiropractic adjusting and chiropractic neurological methods can significantly reduce the pain. It is not at all uncommon for the pain to be 50% better in a single visit and close to 100% pain free in about a week of care with chiropractic neurology – all without drugs and surgery. Find a chiropractic neurologist here: www.ACNB.org

Piriformis Syndrome: Real Sciatic Pain, Fake Sciatica and How to Fix It Immediately

This is best illustrated with a quick story. I have a patient who is a prominent orthopedic surgeon frequently appearing on TV. He refers his whole family to me for care, but he will not allow himself to be a chiropractic patient (too much ego at stake, I guess). One day, I ran into him in the gym, and he looked terrible. He was in obvious pain and walking almost completely bent over. He had the spine

surgeon at his practice check him out, but there was nothing the surgeon could do except administer a steroid injection.

So I said, "I think I know what the problem is, and I can help you. It'll take about 60 seconds." He was in such pain that he finally agreed to try chiropractic neurology. One minute later, I finished with him. He stood up, stars in his eyes, and with amazement he declared, "The...the pain's gone! It's...it's really gone."

Then, he paused for a full 3 seconds, looked at me and literally said, "Eh, probably just a coincidence." Oh well, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink the truth. The point is that his pain was sciatic pain.

He told me he already had an MRI, so I went straight to the piriformis muscle. This muscle can clamp down on the sciatic nerve and cause nerve compression. In many people, the sciatic nerve runs through the piriformis muscle, which can be even more problematic.

The best way to lengthen and relax this muscle is with the help and care of a qualified chiropractic professional. However, the Do-It-Yourself move illustrated in the website can work quite well too.

Chapter 5: Pregnancy and Back Pain

About 50% of women experience back pain during pregnancy. During pregnancy, hormones are released to allow the body's joints to become looser. At the same time, a pregnant woman's body weight and forward weight distribution radically shift. If the woman has decreased muscular tone and, as a result, decreased stability, non-postural muscles will be recruited to support the body. This commonly results in back pain. Therefore, the best approach is to work on increasing postural muscle tone and core strength before becoming pregnant.

If already pregnant, I encourage a pregnancy Pilates course with an experienced instructor. Another great decision to relieve back pain while pregnant is to maintain chiropractic care throughout the pregnancy. It is reported that about 75%-84% of pregnant women with back pain experience relief through chiropractic treatment. I recommend seeing a Board Certified Chiropractic Pediatrician. While they are experts in chiropractic pediatrics, these doctors are also highly trained in special techniques for expecting mothers.

Pregnancy and Sciatic Back Pain

Sciatic pain is most typically experienced as a radiating pain from the very low back, extending down the back of leg. It is best evaluated by a chiropractor. That being stated, I have observed that the most common cause of this type of pain is the piriformis syndrome. Therefore, please refer to the Piriformis Syndrome tip. It can be a useful tip for self-care. Otherwise, I again recommend seeing a chiropractic neurologist or chiropractic pediatrician.

The Stretch

The Psoas: A Pain in the Back May Be a Problem in the Front

Very frequently a tight, painful low back that is felt in a pattern about 3-4 inches beside the spine (going from the pelvis to the lower ribs) arises from overworking a muscle called the Quadratus Lumborum (QL). When overworked, this muscle

develops lactic acid, which produces the burning and tight feeling. The important consideration is why it's tightening? I have clinically observed the QL to rarely be the primary issue.

Instead, I discovered that the Psoas (pronounced: "so-as") is not functioning properly. The psoas is the primary hip flexor. It extends from roughly your bellybutton to your extreme upper thigh. It is massively important in running and walking. It also has a less recognized but still significant role. The psoas is also a lumbar spine stabilizer. So, when it is not working properly, the QL over-engages to help balance out the lumbar spine stability deficit. This can generate a pain in the back.

While the symptoms may lead you to focus on the back, the answer to resolving this is in the front. Releasing the psoas safely requires a trained expert. This treatment could be provided by your chiropractic neurologist, an Active Release Technique (ART) chiropractor and a qualified deep tissue massage therapist. However, nothing I have ever experienced provides immediate and painless relief better than the Pro-ST, which will be discussed in the next tip.

The Pro-ST

Simply put, if you are in pain and you can find a healthcare provider with a The Pro-ST, you may shuffle into the office, and then find yourself dancing on your way out.

Chapter 6: Top Nine Warning Signs

1. You feel as if the muscles at the base of your neck are always tight and tense. It indicates a long-standing postural distortion, where your muscles are straining to keep your head in proper alignment.
2. When you look at the heels of your shoes, they show a different wear pattern. For example, one heel might be worn more on the back outside edge. Uneven wear patterns indicate an imbalance in your hips, knees or feet.
3. You frequently get colds and flus (more than once a year). This can indicate compromised immunity, which is often brought on by spinal subluxations affecting your immune system.
4. You wake up in the morning with low back pain. This is commonly the result of misalignments of the lumbar, lower back, or vertebrae.
5. You have poor posture, with your shoulders rounded and your head carried in front of your shoulders. A "slumped" posture indicates spinal misalignments.
6. Your foot (or feet) flares out to the side when you walk. Take a walk, and look down at your feet as you stride. Do the toes point straight ahead, or does one or both of your feet point out to the side when you walk? Outward pointing feet can indicate back problems, which can add stress to your low back as well.
7. You frequently "crack" your neck or back. Tension builds in these subluxated areas, and twisting your neck or back until you hear a pop relieves this growing pressure. This cracking, however, tends to move hypermobile joints (ones moving too much) while the real culprits stay stuck. In other words, cracking doesn't fix the real problem; when the tension returns, you'll feel the need to pop your neck or back again.

8. You are always tired. It takes a lot more energy to live with a body that is not properly aligned. Most people report more energy under chiropractic care because the energy that used to be "bound up" in the spine is freed up for more useful purposes.
9. Your jaw makes popping and clicking noises. Often the jaw joints (also known as the temporomandibular joints--TMJ's) become misaligned.

CONCLUSION

There are real benefits to seeing a Chiropractor.

You can still consult your regular doctor if you want to. But they will most likely go through the standard procedure of taking your temperature and giving you some strong painkillers.

However, these painkillers only numb the pain. They don't treat or address the underlying cause, and they can create other problems for the body.

Try to fix the pain naturally, instead, with the help of an experienced chiropractor. The chiropractor will treat the injury through a natural method.

So, now that you have decided to get a chiropractor, it is time to go and find one. Chiropractors often practice alone; therefore, it is easy for them to remember their patients.

The Internet has made our life so much easier. A quick search online will throw out some professional chiropractors. Yellow pages are also very helpful in finding one.

When it comes to health care, money does matter.

Alternative medicine treatment has become very common. Therefore, many health care insurance providers may be covered this type of treatment.

Health care need not be complicated. Find a chiropractor and see if you like him or her. Chiropractors are just as qualified as regular doctors; they just keep things as natural as possible.

Thank you for purchasing this book. I hope you will apply the acquired knowledge productively.

For further questions or to schedule a complimentary consultation with an experienced chiropractor at Pinto Chiropractic, call (720) 485-6894 or email us via our website (<http://pintochiropractic.com/>).