

CHIROPRACTIC

Website: <http://www.amerchiro.org/>

The principle of *chiropractic* is that energy, especially of the nervous system, must flow freely through the spinal column for good body health. The relationship of the spine's structure and function to the health of the body is a concept that goes back thousands of years to writings in ancient Greece and China. Even Hippocrates, the Greek physician, (of the Hippocratic Oath for doctors) mentioned the importance of the spine to health.

Chiropractors practice a hands-on technique of health care. Most people recognize chiropractic care for spinal manipulation or adjustment. Whether an injury is from a single event such as lifting something heavy or from a repetitive stress of poor posture, the result is physical and chemical changes that restrict the movement of the spine. Manipulation, whether manual or by device, restores mobility which reduces pain, muscle tightness and inflammation so the body can heal. Chiropractors often use what's called "passive muscle testing" meaning they observe the lengthening or shortening of the legs or arms in reaction to touching a specific spot to locate the area needing adjustment.

Chiropractic is the largest, most heavily regulated, and best recognized of CAM professions. There are an estimated 60,000 chiropractors in America today. The profession was founded by Daniel David Palmer in Davenport, Iowa in 1895. He began the Palmer School of Chiropractic in 1897 and it continues to be one of the most prominent chiropractic colleges to this day.

Chiropractic care has only recently gained a wide degree of acceptance and respectability. For years the American Medical Association worked to discredit the profession but in 1976 Chester Wilk and four other chiropractors filed a lawsuit for restraint of trade. After 14 years of legal battles a federal court ruled against the AMA, finding that they had engaged in an illegal activity, the use of propaganda against chiropractic.

It requires four or five years of study at an accredited chiropractic college to become a doctor of chiropractic. Each person must also pass national board and all state exams in order to practice. There are also individual state licensing requirements in order to be a chiropractor. Anyone interested in beginning chiropractic treatment should research their state's requirements and the background a potential health care professional.

The 2002 federal survey on the use of complementary and alternative medicine in America found that 19.9% had used chiropractic care at some time in their life and 7.5% had used it in the prior 12 months.

USER COMMENTS: *If you've ever found yourself on your hands and knees in pain you probably already know how effective chiropractic care can be. Whether it's too much yard work or simply "zigging when you should've zagged" there is nothing like the pain of nerves in the spine!*

Chiropractors will begin with X-rays and then a careful examination of your entire back. If conditions warrant an adjustment then they'll usually massage the back with a machine to

relax the muscles so they'll move more easily. Then they'll hold your feet together to see the length of your legs as a measuring tool for the structure of your spine. It's amazing how they can find each joint that is out of place by your legs, but apparently the stiffness of back muscles changes the relationship of the leg length.

Adjustments can be made manually in different styles or by the use of a device. The "Activator" is one of the most common tools to deliver consistent pressure at a precise location. It's not uncommon to get a little of both depending on your situation and needs.

Today chiropractors are expanding into new technology like spinal decompression tables and even cold lasers to promote spine health. All too often they'll prescribe wellness to keep you out of trouble in the first place.

I had problems with my legs going numb from my knees down after standing for even a short period of time. After a year with regular adjustments at my chiropractor's office, that has disappeared! Years later, after seeing 3 or 4 different doctors and being misdiagnosed by all, it was my chiropractor who immediately correctly diagnosed my Grave's disease...!

I injured my lower back during a cruise to the Caribbean while working out on the rowing machine. The following day it took me well over 30 minutes to move and stand upright after awaking in the morning. I was extremely uncomfortable and experienced lower back pain that made it difficult for me to seat or to walk. I made an appointment with a friend of mine who is an orthopedic surgeon. Upon examination, he noted that there appeared to be no structural problems but possibly some inflammatory process was responsible for the pain. I was prescribed a muscle relaxant and Valium. After a couple of days of medication, I did not improve with more muscle spasm spreading throughout my lower back and buttocks. I decided to seek a competent Orthopedic Chiropractor and made an appointment for a consultation/evaluation. He took a few X-rays of my lower back and told me that I had a subluxation around my L4, L5 and lower. He also noticed that the muscle spasm had now spread to my upper back. I immediately started adjustments and therapy on the same day. I must say that the first couple of days, I felt more soreness throughout the area. However, each day I began to experience more relief. Slowly, I started to improve and was prescribed back exercises to strengthen the areas of involvement. Well, my improvement continued and I must be grateful that I did not have to have surgery. My Chiropractor told me that my injury could have resulted in at least two herniated discs since area appeared to be bulging around the L4 and L5. I am most grateful to him for his services since he recognized the problem that was obviously not seen by the Orthopedic Surgeon. Today, I still need to be careful of my back during lifting and exercising but I am free of pain and possess good mobility.