

BRAIN FOG: WHAT DOES CHIROPRACTIC HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

Technically, “brain fog” is not a diagnostic term. The possible causes for the combination of “fuzzy” thinking, poor memory and inability to concentrate range from serious pathology to the ordinary stresses of life. Ordinary causes include over-scheduling and sleep deprivation. Serious causes include chemotherapy for cancer (“chemo brain”) and multiple sclerosis. Brain fog along with chronic fatigue often afflicts people who have survived COVID-19 but have long-term residual problems – the “long haulers”.

Migraine is sometimes accompanied by brain fog. A 2013 paper described a 15-year-old boy whose symptoms of migraine and attention deficit improved under chiropractic care (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24396330/>).

Brain fog is quite common in concussion victims. A 2016 paper described a 14-year-old hockey player suffering from a “foggy feeling,” difficulty with concentration, difficulty with memory, fatigue, confusion, and drowsiness following a concussion. Prior to chiropractic care, he had failed to improve over a 13-day post-injury period. After two days of chiropractic care, he enjoyed substantial symptomatic improvement, verified by computerized cognitive testing (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5021900/>).

In our own practice, clearing of brain fog has been a frequent occurrence over the years. We have published some of these experiences. A 27-year-old graduate student was struggling with wrapping up her thesis for a Master of Fine Arts degree. She also stated that she was “blank so far” with regard to five small canvases she was working on. She also suffered from mild shoulder pain. Three days after a chiropractic adjustment, she had found the energy to finish her thesis, as well as three canvases, as well as relief from shoulder pain (“Subject #9”:

https://www.chiroindex.org/?search_page=articles&action=&articleId=21279&search1=Masarsky).

Another patient of ours was a 59-year-old homemaker with a neck injury. She also reported a “drop in concentration” over the previous six years. She produced a poor score on a test of short term memory and attention: reverse digit span. After two chiropractic visits, her reverse digit span was significantly improved, and she stated, “I do feel like I could focus better” (<https://www.dynamicchiropractic.com/mpacms/dc/article.php?id=57442>).

In our publications, we discuss a number of possible mechanisms by which the chiropractic adjustment may help to clear brain fog, but these specifics remain speculative for the moment. In general, we can say that when anything is fogging brain function, the last thing you need is “static” from spinal and cranial nerve irritation. Chiropractic adjustments are designed to correct misalignments that cause nerve irritation (subluxations).

Our COVID-Safe Practice

To keep you as safe as possible we follow CDC practices including:

- We ask that you wear a mask covering your nose and mouth during your visit; we will do likewise.
- We sanitize adjusting tables and pillows and wash our hands for at least 20 seconds between patients.
- We check our own temperatures before we head to work, and we check yours on arrival.
- We are set up to accommodate safe distancing.



Mask Comfort

It can be hard to get used to any new thing, especially something that lives on your face. Luckily, masks of all kinds are readily available now to help us fight the current plague and protect each other. They come in varied shapes and sizes. This gives us many pathways to comfort.

Can't breathe easily? For most people, it's just a matter of getting used to it - a learning curve of sensation. Otherwise, try a different type of mask than the one you're currently using. If you're wearing a cloth mask and you find that inhaling pulls the mask too close to your nose, try one with a little more "boxy" style or switch to one of the mostly blue or pink surgical style masks you see around. Their structure allows for an air pocket that won't pull in with inhalation. Doctors and nurses wear them all day.

"This thing is killing my ears." If you're handy with a needle and thread or have a good friend who is, you can change the length of the ear loops so they're not quite so tight. You can also wear a mask with ties instead of ear loops. You'll have less pressure on your ears. Added bonus: you can custom fit the mask to your head every time you wear it.

Can't keep the mask from slipping off your nose and hanging there like a colorful little hammock? Gotta get that thing to cover your nose, or it sort of doesn't count. There are extenders that will pull the mask away from your ears, while holding it more tightly around your head. They're basically a strip of fabric, knitted or not, with two buttons to slip the ear loops over. Can't find one? Once again, that skilled good buddy can help, or ask us and we'll walk you through making one.

Are you a very small person? Let's not ignore the obvious. There are child sized masks that may well be a better fit for you. Who's going to know your mask was made for a kid? Be petite, comfortable and safe!

MULTIPACKS

If you are interested in having your spine checked regularly on an early intervention basis, you may be interested in our multipacks. You'll save money while safeguarding your spinal health and mobility.

CHIROPRACTIC INDEPENDENCE DAYS

In an effort to make chiropractic care available to everyone, we have set aside selected Mondays as Chiropractic Independence Days. On these days, care is independent of your insurance status or financial situation. Anonymous cash payment goes into a box at the front desk, or you may pay by check or credit card. How much? That's up to your judgment of our care's worth and your ability to pay. (Medicare is the one exception; those fees are federally mandated.)

New patients are welcome on Chiropractic Independence Days, schedule permitting. This is a great way to introduce friends and family members to chiropractic care.

Time slots go quickly, so book early. We ask that you let us know as soon as possible if you need to cancel or reschedule, so that a fellow community member can use your time slot.

Thanks!



Have you been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other active conflict area in the past five years? If so, we'd like to offer you a year's care at no cost to you. All we need to see is a copy of your orders and your ID. Call 703-938-6441 for more information. Thanks, and welcome home. (Photo: U.S. troops planting a tree. An excellent idea on Earth Day and every day!)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH CLASSES

As part of our commitment to educating the public, we currently offer the following courses:

Concussion: This course is designed to help you better understand what the concussion victim can expect in the short term and long term. **Venues:** **1.** Unitarian Church (via Zoom), 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA Thursday, January 28, 10:00-11:00 am. Contact Casey Tarr, 703-821-6838 or eileentarr1@verizon.net.

2. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. Tuesday, June 15, 10:00-11:00 am. Contact Kathy Blevins, 703-255-7801 or KBlevins@viennava.gov.

Breathing Exercises for Brain Potential: Would you like to sharpen your focus at work, further excel at school, achieve more in your favorite sports or games, or just be more “together” in your everyday life? Learn breathing exercises that support brain function. **Venue:** Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna, Tuesday, April 20, 10:00-11:00 am. Contact Kathy Blevins, 703-255-7801 or KBlevins@viennava.gov.

Pregnancy, Birth, and Your Back: Sacroiliac misalignment is common during and after a pregnancy. Learn a few simple practices to help you through. **Venue:** Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna, Tuesday, May 4, 10:00-11:00 am. Contact Kathy Blevins, 703-255-7801 or KBlevins@viennava.gov.

Mouth and Throat Toning for Better Sleep: Has your snoring ever inspired others to comment? Are you ever jolted awake by your own snoring? Is your drowsiness causing you to be accident prone? Learn exercises to tone your throat and mouth.
Venue: Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna, Tuesday, May 18, 10:00-11:00 am. Contact Kathy Blevins, 703-255-7801 or KBlevins@viennava.gov.

Can't Make Any of these Dates? No worries. We will schedule these classes for your own community group at no charge. Alternatively, we can arrange a personal Zoom session for you. Fee = \$18. You can make this a private session or invite one or more friends to join you. Also, we are looking into the possibility of recording these courses and posting them on our You Tube channel. We will keep you informed.

CALENDAR

Jan: 4: office reopens for 2021 9, 23: Saturdays Open 25: Chiropractic Independence Day 28: Full moon	Apr: 3, 17: Saturdays Open 12: Chiropractic Independence Day 22: Earth Day 26: Full moon
FEB: 2: GROUND HOG DAY! 6, 20: Saturdays open 15: Chiropractic Independence Day 27: Full moon	May: 1, 15: Saturdays Open 17: Chiropractic Independence Day 26: Full moon
Mar: 6, 20: Saturdays Open 15: Chiropractic Independence Day 20: First Day of Spring 28: Full moon	<u>STANDARD HOURS OF OPERATION</u> M-W-F: 10:00-1:00 & 3:00-6:00 Sat: 9:00-noon (selected Saturdays) Tue/Thu/Sun: Emergencies Only