

Vienna Chiropractic Associates, P.C.

News

September–December 2009



Brain Fitness Tips

Most people understand the concept that joint and muscle exercises will help support the musculoskeletal benefits of the chiropractic adjustment. What is often less well understood is the concept that certain exercises can support the neurological benefits of those adjustments.

One frequent neurological benefit of the chiropractic adjustment is improved balance. Not only do we notice this benefit among our patients, but it has been independently verified in the clinical literature.¹ Vertebral misalignments and restrictions (subluxations) bombard the nervous system with inaccurate signals, including those signals relevant to the brain's balance circuitry. Recent evidence suggests that these inaccurate signals can actually re-wire the central nervous system in an abnormal way.² Restoration of balance under chiropractic care suggests that normal signals are reinforced, and the body may be able to re-establish healthy circuitry.

The importance of balance cannot be overestimated. For many people, the loss of this function is one of the most distressing aspects of aging. Poor balance is a risk factor for falls, which can obviously re-injure (and re-subluxate) a patient.³ Falls frequently involve head injury, which can hasten the aging of the brain. Head injury can also increase the risk of serious brain disorders such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.^{4,5} Clearly, anything that will work with the chiropractic adjustment to clear the brain's balance

circuitry is worth considering.

In his 2007 book, Dr. Norman Doidge (a member of Columbia University's research faculty) described the case of a woman who felt as if she were perpetually falling.⁶ Her severe balance problems, which ended her career as an international sales rep, began with an adverse reaction to an antibiotic. This reaction disrupted the brain circuitry devoted to balance.

She was treated with an experimental

device that gave her additional sensory cues about where her body was located in space. This sensory feedback helps to reinforce new brain pathways as patients work to regain their footing.

Fingertip Feedback: A low-tech version of sensory feedback can be used by anyone. It is adapted from standard rehabilitation techniques.⁷ Try the Single Leg Balance exercise described in our article, "Pain Relief: A Balancing Act." You will find this article in our May–August 2007 newsletter. You can also pick up a copy of

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Office Hours

Monday	10:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Friday	8:00 am–1:00 pm; 3:00 pm–6:30 pm
Tuesday	3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Saturday ...	9:00 am–1:00 pm (two to three Saturdays/month)
Wednesday ..	10:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Sunday	Office closed
Thursday	Office closed		

For appointments, please call 703-938-6441. If we are closed or away from the desk, please leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as practicable. For some reason, parts of Vienna appear to be unkind to cell phone transmission. If you have difficulty getting through on your cell, please try again.

Office Calendar

September	26, 27	Thanksgiving holiday, closed
7	Labor Day, closed	
12, 26	Saturdays open	
21	Independence Day	
28	Yom Kippur, office closed	
October		
10, 24	Saturdays open	
19	Independence Day	
November		
7, 28	Saturdays open	
16	Ind. Day (& the full moon)	
December		
21	Independence Day	
5, 19	Saturdays open	
24-29	Winter holiday, closed	
30	mid-holiday repair day	
31	Winter holiday, closed	
January		
1	New Year's Day, closed	
2, 16, 30 ...	Saturdays open	
17	Independence Day	

Note: We make every effort to provide you with an accurate calendar. However, each newsletter covers a period of four months, with five on the calendar and unforeseen circumstances during this time period may require minor changes to the schedule.

the article at the office. If you have trouble with this exercise, try lightly touching the wall with your fingertips. The sensory feedback from your fingertips will give your brain additional information about the location of your body in space. As your balance gets better, use just one fingertip. After a while, try withdrawing your finger from the wall for longer and longer periods of time. This “fingertip feedback” will work synergistically with your chiropractic adjustments in terms of reinforcing accurate neurological pathways and possibly re-wiring your brain’s balance centers in a healthy way.

This article is the first of what we hope will be a popular and long-running feature. Each Brain Fitness Tip will be an exercise, nutritional tip, or other self-help advice to advance the fitness of your nervous system in general and your brain in particular. Our goal is to provide you with practical advice based on solid science with direct relevance to your chiropractic care. Let us know how we’re doing!

References

1. Masarsky, C.S., M. Todres-Masarsky. “Subluxation and the Special Senses” in C.S. Masarsky, M. Todres-Masarsky (Editors) *Somatovisceral Aspects of Chiropractic: An Evidence-Based Approach*. Churchill Livingstone, New York, 2001 and Neurological Fitness, Vienna, VA, 2008.
2. Bakkum, B.W., C.N.R Henderson, et al. “Preliminary Morphological Evidence That Vertebral Hypomobility Induces Synaptic Plasticity in the Spinal Cord.” *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 2007; 30: 336-342.
3. Hurvitz, E., et al. “Unipedal Stance Testing as an Indicator of Fall Risk Among Older Patients.” *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 2000; 81: 587-591.
4. Mayeux, R., R. Ottman, et al. “Synergistic Effects of Traumatic Head Injury and Apolipoprotein-4 in Patients with Alzheimer’s Disease.” *Neurology*, 1995; 45: 555-557.
5. Seidler, A., W. Hellenbrand, et al. “Possible Environmental, Occupational, and Other Etiological Factors for Parkinson’s Disease: A Case-Control Study in Germany.” *Neurology*, 1996; 46: 1275-1284.
6. Doidge, N. *The Brain That Changes Itself*, pp. 1-26. Penguin Group, New York, 2007.
7. Herdman, S.J. (Editor). *Vestibular Rehabilitation*. FH Davis, Philadelphia, 1994.

Student Discount

Vienna Chiropractic is pleased to announce a new program, the student discount. We’re defining “full-time” as carrying 12 or more credits per semester, of which at least 75% require your presence in the classroom, in either a college or post-secondary vocational program. Please bring a copy of your student ID and paperwork indicating compliance with the full-time requirement with you the first time you take advantage of this benefit.

Like all of our programs, the first year is an experiment. If it works well for you and us, we’ll continue.

Distracted?

There’s a meeting you didn’t know about, auditions, a trip to the vet, a trip to the grocery and a basketball game you have to remember to get to (this time!). Oh, and a chiropractic appointment! In the interest of helping you remember where you need to be, despite modern times, why not ask us for a reminder call or FAX? It can’t help with all the other scheduling, but it might help organize some of it, while helping you get here on time.

Just tell us when you want the call, day of or day before and which of your numbers you’d prefer we use. Mondays and Fridays will, of necessity, be “day of” calls. We can FAX you if that’s more useful.

Research In The Office

We’d like to thank those of you who have participated in our **Chiropractic & Creativity** research project. We are still accepting subjects and you don’t have to be a patient here in order to participate. We’d like to get as many subjects as possible, to make our statistics even more meaningful—and because it’s interesting!

There is another phase coming up, involving problem solving and innovation in the business world. For this one, we will

be working with people from the business community, outside of the practice. If you know of someone whose position requires creative concepts and planning in the business sphere who might be interested, please have them call us at **703-938-6441**. Thank you.

Chiropractic Independence Day

In an effort to make chiropractic care affordable to everyone, we have set aside selected Mondays as Chiropractic Independence Days. On these days, there are no set fees. Your decision to seek care is independent of insurance coverage or your financial situation. Payment (which goes anonymously, unless you write a check, into a box at the front counter) is determined by you, factoring in what you feel the care is worth and your ability to pay. (Medicare is the one exception, since those fees are federally mandated.) We do accept new patients on Independence Days, as long as there is availability in the schedule. This is an excellent way to introduce family, friends and co-workers to chiropractic care. It does make sense to make your appointment early as these time slots fill in quickly.

Veterans

Have you been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan during the past five years? If so, we have a gift for you. Whether you were injured, injured and still receiving care or would just like to treat your spine and nervous system to some more optimal functioning, 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.** It’s our way of saying “Thanks, and welcome home.”

DRUG SIDE EFFECTS OR The Tale of the Incredibly Focused House Painter

There once was an incredibly focused house painter who was widely known in the community for doing work that was so perfect it was hard to believe it had been done by a human being. He could mix any color and his edges were razor sharp. He always showed up on time and his only requirement was that he be left alone to work. He knew what needed to be done, he could do it expertly and he'd send you the bill later.

There was a woman (could have been a man, but it wasn't) who had painted her living room and dining room the month before, but wasn't satisfied with the work. She felt her beautiful rooms could be even lighter and brighter, so she called the incredibly focused painter and he agreed to come. They measured, picked out colors and set a time.

At exactly 7:59AM (they had an 8AM start time), she looked out the door and watched as his van ran over the irises bordering the first part of her driveway. "Well, she thought, "That's a big vehicle and that really is a tight turn into the drive. He didn't mean to do it." He came in, carrying a ladder and the paint, which he dropped on the tile (vintage and no longer available) floor in the hallway. "What," she thought "are a few shattered tiles that can't be replaced in the light of the perfect wall-caressing paint job? I want it bright! And perfect!"

He waved to the woman and disappeared into the bathroom. After a

few minutes he came out and started moving, draping and taping. The woman went into the bathroom to wash her hands and skidded in the pool of water that had been dripped all over. When she sailed past the commode, she almost fainted and hit her head. "The poor guy must be sick!" she said, "and he came anyway! What responsibility! What reliability!" Then she went upstairs, grabbed a pile of paperwork, turned up the stereo (Miles, Stones, Richard and Mimi Farina, we weren't there, so we're not sure) and focused on her project while imagining a less "interesting" morning.

Hours passed and she turned off the music and wandered downstairs. True to his reputation, the incredibly focused house painter was gone. He'd left a neatly written note on the kitchen counter that gave her very specific instructions on how to care for her gorgeous new paint job, including instructions to call him if there were any problems. The walls were exactly the right shade, there were no dribbles or streaks and the ceiling looked as though it had been attached afterward. She spent the rest of the day trying to revive the irises and get the tread marks out of the flower border, mopping and disinfecting the bathroom and calling various flooring businesses to see if she could get something to replace the broken tiles or at least look OK mixed in with the intact ones. She called a friend to come for lunch in

the spectacular, newly painted dining room the next day, took a shower, and crawled into bed.

The next day, her friend came over, parking on the street to avoid the flower bed project. She made sure not to trip over the little tile repair project in the hall and beamed at the freshly painted rooms. "He did a wonderful job and even left me care instructions," said the woman who lived in the house. "I do find I'm more tired from the cleanup than I thought I'd be and I really loved those old tiles. That would all be OK, but something bothered me all night and I know now what it was. I'm truly appreciative of the job he did, I've never seen such a good paint job. It's just that I still feel these rooms could be a little brighter. I just don't feel like calling him."

Her friend asked, "Did you ever open the blinds all the way?" And they did, and the room was as she'd always imagined it, just not overlooking the Mediterranean. And she wondered what it would have looked like if she'd done that earlier.

Let's recap: If you have a problem, your best bet is to seek the simplest, least potentially problematic solution first. (Open the blinds, change your diet, get adjusted, see what your own body will do for you with a little gentle guidance.) Once you've done that and it is apparent that you may need something more drastic (drugs, which are as intensely focused on their specific mission as was our hypothetical painter) to get the results you need or want (and ask yourself if you're ready to deal with the side effects and to accept the results, which may not be everything you want), get the best advice and care possible, but don't abdicate. Ask questions. This is different than hostility or disrespect. It shows you want to be actively involved in your own

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