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## *Excerpted from the 4/01 - 8/01 Newsletter*

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### **What Is "Neurological Fitness"?** [Table of Contents](#) | [Go Top](#)

A person who cannot run two miles or swim twenty laps is not necessarily suffering from a disease, disorder or injury. No insurance company would cover treatment for someone who is "swimming impaired" or "marathon challenged"! However, we would consider that person to have a lower level of physical fitness than someone who could do those things. Working towards a higher level of physical fitness would be a rational health goal for that person, whether or not they were suffering from a specific disease or ailment.

In the chiropractic examination, our major concern is the search for disruptions of normal nerve function caused by joints that are not properly aligned or mobile. These sites of abnormal joint mobility or alignment which disrupt nerve function are called "subluxations." These subluxations can be accompanied by arthritis, disc disease, sprains, or any other form of disease or injury; however, chiropractic clinical work views the subluxation as a problem in its own right. Since the nervous system coordinates all bodily functions, subluxations can cause those functions to become less efficient. Reaction time, breathing capacity, and immune function can all suffer as a result. We refer to this situation as a reduction in your "neurological fitness."

Obviously if you have a back injury, neck sprain, headache or some other painful disorder, correcting subluxations can help you recover more rapidly. However, we recommend that you be checked on a monthly basis, even if you are symptom-free, so that we can assist you in reaching a higher level of neurological fitness. Like physical fitness, neurological fitness is a rational health goal, whether or not you are suffering from a specific disease or ailment.

If you are curious about the scientific support for the chiropractic concept of neurological fitness, please see or ask to see our research review books by the same name.

We all like to feel we smell good, and there are hundreds of companies out there willing to help us do so. Besides perfume and after-shave, everything seems to be infused with extra scent, including hair sprays, deodorants, soap and detergents. The problem is, many of us are already flirting with sensory overload due to extreme personal schedules and responsibilities and pollution, all of which can chip away at our immune systems and our ability to adapt to our surroundings.

Some of us are more sensitive to odors (organic and artificial) than others. What to one person is a delightful whiff of excitement or relaxation is the prelude to a two-day migraine to others.

Since our physical makeup's are highly individual, not everyone gets the migraine, but even those with a better capacity for adaptation can be adversely affected after a day of hundreds of extra scents encountered at work, on the Metro, at the grocery, and yes, the chiropractic office.

Many of you tell us you've seen signs up at the gym or in other settings to please refrain from wearing extra scent while there. Now we're asking you to please help staff and our other patients by limiting the extra smells you wear into the office. We realize you're not necessarily going to be in a position to remove perfume, etc., before coming in, but if you could try to do the following, it would be very considerate:

1. If your appointment is early in the day, please try not to use extra sprays, shower scrubs or oils that day;
2. If you can apply perfume or cologne after your visit, that would help a lot of people; and
3. If you're coming late in the day, please wait to renew your scent until after you leave the office.

Obviously, not everyone gets sick from these scents, and some are unavoidable or very pleasant for most people, but more people than you would imagine are adversely affected by the cumulative cocktail of aromas encountered during the course of a day. We really appreciate your cooperation in lessening the problem.

To find out more about chemical sensitivity, contact:

*The Chemical Sensitivity Connection*  
c/o Larry Plumlee, M.D.  
(301) 897-9614

### **Research Review: Parkinson's Symptoms and Chiropractic**

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Reference: Elster, E.L. "Upper Cervical Chiropractic Management of a Patient with Parkinson's Disease: A Case Report. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 2000; 23: 573-577.

**Synopsis:** Approximately 1.5 million Americans have Parkinson's disease. Some 15% of these are diagnosed before the age of 50.

Dr. Elster's patient was a 60-year old man who had suffered from Parkinson's disease for seven years. His symptoms included rigidity and tremor in the left arm and leg, memory loss, poor balance, depression, slurred speech, fatigue, spinal pain and insomnia. As part of the intake examination, the patient filled out a standard questionnaire which rates the severity of 44 Parkinson's symptoms.

On chiropractic examination, signs of upper cervical subluxation ("pinched nerves" in the upper neck) were noted. Dr. Elster adjusted the patient's upper cervical spine seven times over a period of three months.

There was an overall improvement of 43%, according to a follow-up symptom questionnaire. This may be an understatement of the patient's actual improvement because the questionnaire does not include fatigue, insomnia or spinal pain--areas in which the patient experienced his most dramatic improvement in these symptoms. Balance improved to such a degree that the patient was able to resume bicycle riding for the first time in several years.

It must be noted that this is only one case. We cannot make any general statement about the role of chiropractic adjustments in alleviating the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, much less affecting the disease process itself. Indeed, the disease process is not yet fully understood.

However, common sense would dictate that when brain function is compromised due to Parkinson's or any other disease, any additional impediment to normal neurological function should be corrected. Chiropractic care does not interfere in any way with medical management of Parkinson's disease or any other disorder. The goal of the chiropractic adjustment is not the treatment of pathology or disease, but rather the enhancement of "neurological fitness, so that the body can function at a higher level, with or without the presence of pathology or disease.

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