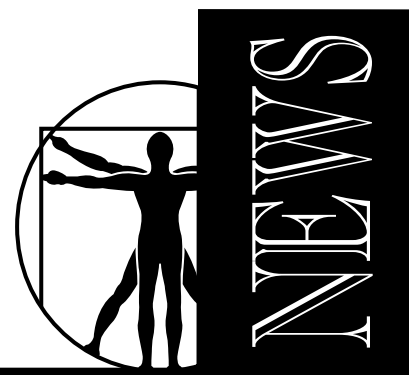


Vienna Chiropractic Associates, P.C.

The Down to Earth Alternative

May-August 2007



Pain Relief: A Balancing Act

When most people think of chiropractic care, they do so in terms of back pain, neck pain, tension headache, sports injuries, and similar problems. What many people don't realize is that the same vertebral misalignments or restrictions (subluxations) that can contribute to these painful problems can also disturb your balance.

Good inner ear function, stable vision, and reliable muscle sense (kinesthesia) are all important for normal balance. Spinal subluxations can disturb any of these sensory functions, in turn creating disturbed balance, and increasing the risk of falls and other injuries.¹ There is a small but intriguing body of evidence indicating that correction of these subluxations through the chiropractic adjustment can assist the body in normalizing these senses, while simultaneously speeding the body's response to painful spine-related problems.²

Although the published evidence demonstrating improved balance after chiropractic adjustments is not yet compelling, it is useful to compare chiropractic to the usual alternative. Commonly used painkilling drugs

can drive your sense of balance way off. Most people have a common sense understanding that muscle relaxants and narcotic painkillers can throw their balance off. What is not widely understood is that the inner ear can be upset by over-the-counter anti-inflammatories such as aspirin and ibuprofen (Motrin®).³ Therefore,

even these seemingly "mild" over-the-counter painkillers can create balance problems.

Whether the origin of a balance problem is subluxation, drugs, or some other cause, the early stages can be subtle. The following is a useful self-test to help you catch balance disturbances at an early stage.

(Continued on page 2)

Office Hours

Mon.	10:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Fri.	8:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00–6:30 pm
Tues.	3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Sat.	9:00 am–1:00 pm (We are usually open at least two Saturdays/month)
Wed.	10:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Sun.	Office Closed
Thurs.	Office Closed		

Please call us at 703-938-6441. If we are closed or away from the desk, you will be able to leave a message. If you are having trouble reaching us by cell phone from certain areas (including parts of Vienna), keep trying. Visit our website: www.neurologicalfitness.com.

Office Calendar

May

12, 19 Open for Saturday hours
21 Chiropractic Ind. Day
28 Closed for Memorial Day

June

2, 16, 30 Open for Saturday hours
18 Chiropractic Ind. Day

July

4 Closed the 4th, Nat. Holiday
14, 28 Open for Saturday hours
16 Chiropractic Ind. Day

August

11, 18 Open for Saturday hours
13 Meteor shower; take a look, weather permitting!
20 Chiropractic In. Day

September

3 Closed for Labor Day, Reopen September 4
17 Chiropractic Ind. Day
Saturday hours in Sept. to be announced

Note: We are making every effort to provide you with an accurate calendar. However, each newsletter covers a period of four months. Unforeseen circumstances during this time period may require minor changes in the calendar.

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Single Leg Balance

{First, a note of caution: If you have a recent history of dizziness or poor balance, only perform this test when someone else is around. If you have recently sprained, dislocated or fractured any part of your lower extremity (from your hip down to your foot), wait until the injury has healed before doing this test. The test should be performed in flats or bare feet.}

Stand facing a corner of the room (so you can easily catch yourself if your balance is not as good as you think it is). With your arms at your sides, stand on one leg. You are shooting for 30 seconds. (If you have to hop, put your foot down, or touch the wall, that's your time.) Now, do the same with your other leg. If your single leg balance time is less than 30 seconds on either leg, subluxation, drugs, or some other influence may be disturbing your balance.

Failure to pass the single leg balance test has been linked to an increased risk of falls and subsequent injury.⁴ A recent study indicates that a loss of balance may be an early warning sign of dementia in seniors.⁵

If you fail the single leg balance test, a chiropractic evaluation would be an excellent idea, even if you were not in pain. If adjustments of vertebral subluxations do not improve your balance, the doctor of chiropractic can direct you to another type of practitioner for further evaluation. If you are in pain, chiropractic care can help your body resolve the problem without risking new injury due to drug-related loss of balance. Consider the wisdom of the saying, "Chiropractic first, drugs second, surgery last." We think you'll find this saying to be on firm footing.

References

1. Walsh, M.J., B.I. Polus and M.N. Webb. "The Role of Cervical Spine in Balance and Risk of Falling in the Elderly." *Chiropractic Journal of Australia*, 2004; 34(1): 19-22.
2. Masarsky, C.S. and M. Todres-Masarsky. "Subluxation and the Special Senses." In Masarsky, C.S.

and M. Todres-Masarsky (Editors): *Somatovisceral Aspects of Chiropractic: An Evidence-Based Approach*. Churchill Livingstone, New York, 2001.

3. Arky, R. (Editor). *Physician's Desk Reference, 50th Edition*. Medical Economics Company, Montvale, NJ, 1996.
4. 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.

5. Wang, L., E.B. Larson, J.D. Bowen and G. Van Belle. "Performance-Based Physical Function and Future Dementia in Older People." *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 2006; 166: 1115-1120.

In The Pool

Soon, area pools will be opening, and many of us will be taking advantage of this opportunity to cool off and exercise at the same time.

If you swim competitively and your event(s) are in certain specialized strokes, remember that these movements are not typical of those used in the rest of the day, and may represent unusual positioning and body use. Please stretch and warm up properly before hitting the pool. Make sure you perform your particular stroke as it was designed to minimize injury and maximize performance. Please feel free to call the office and discuss your technique and any effect it may

be having on your spine.

For those of you, swimming strictly for fun, maximize benefit and minimize injury by remembering the following: A.) Follow through with the longest strokes you can to discourage cramping and encourage the development of long muscles. B.) Use a stroke that lets you turn your head in both directions. This will help protect your cervical spine and neck muscles. C.) Try to avoid strokes that force you to hyperextend your spine. Hyperextension can strain your back.

Now, sunscreen up and enjoy the sun! ❖

Thank You For Your Referrals

We'd like to thank those of you who have been referring family, friends and co-workers. For a health care provider, referral is the sincerest form of flattery.

If your friend or relative would like to quietly observe as you get adjusted, that's okay with us as long as it's okay with you. If this is inconvenient, our DVD may satisfy their curiosity; it features Dr. Masarsky doing an actual adjustment on the air.

FEEDBACK REQUEST: Please share this newsletter with someone unfamiliar with chiropractic. Let us know if they found the articles clear and informative. This type of feedback is of inestimable value in fine-tuning our public education efforts. Thank you.

They Grow Fast, Don't They?

Now that we've established that... this isn't about the kids themselves (for that, see our articles in past newsletters, the new patient pack, or ask us!). This is about the physical interface between child world and adult world, in which spatial perspective and size perception are really, really different. We're offering a few hints that may make your physical relationship with your child a little less like entering an Olympic event with no warm-up and keep you both a little more accident free. Presenting...

The Events!

The From the Ground and Over the Head Swing

This usually happens when you and your child haven't seen each other for a few hours, and everyone is very excited. The child takes a running leap, is snatched up by the parent at high speed, and the momentum carries the child over your head and back a little. This is definitely not recommended at all for children weighing 25 pounds or more (less if you're tiny yourself). To your child, you are as big as a bear. You have to understand that even bears have to protect their backs. Unless you're planning on wearing a weight-lifting belt to come home (and maybe even then), this move targets a huge amount of stress into your low back and puts an exaggerated backward arch into your thoracic spine (mid-back and rib attachments). Lifting a giggling, squirming child in this way may make your heart soar, but it can wreck your spine. You would do better to gather them up carefully, hold them briefly at a reasonable level, and then hug them. The hug is mostly what they want anyway, and your spine will be delighted with the new version of this event.

The Cuddle Time, "Am-I-Happy-To-See-You!" Head Butt

Your infant or toddler's cranial bones are still mostly soft, but you're

going to have trouble believing that when your sweet, smiling child suddenly lifts his or her head from your chest into your jaw or propels themselves across the room to give you a big kiss and smacks his or her head full force into your nose or forehead. As we head into summer, we are reminded that the pool is another major venue for this event as your little fish propels him or herself straight up into your head or face. Yes, we've seen broken noses from this one! More likely, the head butt is good for a TMJ (jaw) problem or headache for both of you.

The best thing you can do to protect yourself from this one is to expect it and be happy if it doesn't happen. Your child's sense of the space between you, as well as the actual speed of a motion and the probable reaction time of the other individual is not all that developed yet, so you'll have to gauge these for both of you for now. While chiropractic isn't magic, there is literature to suggest that keeping spinally well-adjusted can help improve your coordination and reaction time, so that you're both in a better position to avoid "sudden impact cephalalgia" (translation: my kid head butted me in the face, and now we both have headaches).

The Under Two Second Shopping Center Lunge

Actually, this event may be held in parking lots, schools and any place else where there are crowds, traffic, or natural hazards. A healthy, bright kid is a curious kid, and almost anything new, brightly colored or cute can spur a burst of interest. Confident in their new skills of self-propulsion, the impulse is just to run over and check it out. Your job as a parent is to quickly determine whether or not this is a problem and, if so, to quickly intercept the sudden sprint. Unfortunately, this often involves a lunge and twist on your part, with a yank at the end range if your reflexes

are good and the goal of grabbing in time is met. As with any other sudden effort, most of the time you will escape largely unscathed, but this particular event can sometimes wreak havoc on your neck, shoulder, pelvis and ribs (from the twist) and leg (from the "plant and grab"). If your best, "Mommy/Daddy needs you to stay next to me and hold my hand," talk is ineffective, there are harnesses designed for the occasion. If you are uncomfortable with using one, as inconvenient and time-consuming as it may be, it might prove to be in both your best interests to plan your trips to crowded busy places around times that a friend or relative can watch your child at home. If this isn't possible, try to make the trips short enough so they can approximate your child's attention span, and try to hold their attention on you and the activity at hand as much as possible. It isn't easy, but it sure beats some of the injuries we've seen, including the occasional three point landing when attempting to capture a future sprinter. If you do get hurt, clean yourself off, apply ice to the injured area (ask us for a flyer explaining the proper procedure) and call us. Once everything is moving again, we can work with specific muscle groups for increased strength and flexibility.

The Sleeping-with-Kids (-and-Pets) Spinal Sacrifice

Many of us sleep with our children or pets for some or all of the night. This can be wonderful, warm, and tranquilizing as long as all parties respect each other's space and native sleep position. Good luck! When it comes to love, the tendency is to accept that the loved one's "curled in a ball, except for the foot in your neck and elbow in your kidneys that leaves you 10% of the bed at a 70 degree angle" posture is necessary to their happiness. That belief may wear thin if you spend the night auditioning for Cirque du Soleil, and can't move the next day. As emotionally delicate as the situation may be, if you end up sleeping in a position that has you in here every few days, no matter how well you're caring for yourself otherwise, changes have to be made either

in venue or scheduling or postural compromise has to be made in order to keep you functional in your event.

The Cannonball Express

Most of the above have been about your spine and its life with infants and toddlers. Enter the five-year-olds. They're active, somewhat more coordinated and very creative in coming up with new games to play with the indestructible giants in their lives (you!). Even if you are five foot zip, you are now a favorite piece of gym equipment and possibly an important factor in your child's coordination and development. That same child is not necessarily capable of understanding that jumping on your back from any height is not a good idea. The human cannonball, even 35 pounds worth, landing on your back while you are lying on your belly reading or are bent over trying to figure out what's happening under the sink, needs to be off-limits. Tell them so. Even if they don't understand why, they will know it's not a good way to treat you even if you are huge in their eyes, and you

can continue to care for them healthfully and without pain. You will also be a lot more fun.

While childcare is not as fraught with constant peril as the above events may make it seem, your children are in training for life in the greater world and their senses of space, time and speed, as well as safety are not yet well-developed. Therefore, your reflexes and experience have to cover them as they learn. Understanding the above can help you avoid a lot of common injuries that often occur during that teaching/learning process. That being said, if you lose the event and the problem seems to be sticking around, don't wait too long to come in. The human body is generally a quick learner, but it can also learn to adapt to a bad physical situation, making it harder for you to heal properly. As noted before, there is good evidence that chiropractic may be able to improve your reaction time and coordination. When you are raising a child, especially one who is already extremely curious and active, those are good capabilities to have in abundance. ❖

What Is Chiropractic Independence Day?

In an effort to make chiropractic care affordable to everyone, we set aside selected Mondays as Chiropractic Independence Days. On Independence Days, there are no set fees. Your decision to seek chiropractic care is independent of your insurance or income level. Payment (which goes anonymously into a box at the front counter) is a combination of what you feel the care is worth and your ability to pay. We do accept new patients on Independence Day, depending on time availability, making this an excellent time to introduce a friend, co-worker, or loved one to chiropractic care. It does make sense to make your appointment well in advance, as these time slots fill in quickly.

Multipacks

If you want to have your spine checked regularly on an early intervention basis, you may be interested in our six- or twelve-visit packs, or the eighteen-visit family pack. You will save money while safeguarding your spinal health and mobility. Our staff would be happy to answer your questions on these programs.

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News

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Address Correction Requested

