



Vienna Chiropractic Associates, P.C.

NEWS

September - December 2006

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The Down to Earth Alternative



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Office Hours

Monday: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm **Friday:** 8:30 am – 1:00 pm
3:00 - 7:30 pm 3:00 – 6:30 pm

Tuesday: 3:00 – 7:30 pm **Saturday:** 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
(We are usually open
at least two
Saturdays/month)

Wednesday: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm **Sunday:** Office Closed
3:00 – 7:30 pm

Thursday: 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.

Calendar

September

4 Closed for Labor Day
9, 16, 30 Open for Saturday hours
18 Chiropractic Independence Day

October

2 Closed for Yom Kippur
7 Closed for Chiropractic seminar
14, 28 Open for Saturday hours
23 Chiropractic Independence Day

November

11, 18, 25 Open for Saturday hours

23-24 **Office Closed for Thanksgiving,
Open Saturday, 11-25**
27 **Chiropractic Independence Day**

December

2, 9, 16, 23 **Open for Saturday hours**
24-1/2/07 **Closed for New Year Holiday (Office will be open
12-29 only during this week)**

January

2 **Office reopens**
6. 13. 20 **Open for Saturday hours**
22 **Chiropractic Independence Day**

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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ANATOMY LESSON: The Carpal Tunnel

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The carpal tunnel is the “potential” space at the front (palm side) of your wrist. It’s formed by the two bones of the forearm (the radius on the thumb side; the ulna on the “pinkie” side) and the eight wrist bones (carpal bones), which create an arch. The arch is crossed by a band-like ligament, forming the tunnel. If the carpal tunnel is crowded by tissue swelling, arthritic spurs, cysts, or anything else, the major nerve passing through the tunnel (the median nerve) will be compressed. This can lead to pain, numbness, weakness and other symptoms in the wrist and hand. This is called carpal tunnel syndrome.

Any repetitive movement of the wrist, especially if it is also awkward, can cause carpal tunnel syndrome. People who do a lot of typing or mousing are especially vulnerable. If these activities make up a significant part of your day, please change wrist position often, and try to avoid hyperflexion or hyperextension (bending your wrist too far forward or back) for too long. These movements force the radius and ulna apart, causing the tunnel to flatten out and compress the nerve.

These same symptoms can be caused by interference or trapping of the nerve or its root anywhere from the wrist to the neck, where the nerve originates. The good news is, chiropractic care can often remove the interference to the nerve, thereby eliminating the problem.

Spine-Friendly Driving [Table of Contents](#) | [Top of page](#)

Many people create spinal stress without being aware of doing so. One common source of this unnoticed spinal stress is driving with a “heavy foot” on the brake and accelerator pedals. This gives your spine a jerky start-and-stop ride. A related problem is needless working of the steering wheel, instead of driving in a straight or smoothly curving line (depending on the shape of the road). This gives your spine a jagged zigzag ride.

Our recommendation: make a conscious effort to follow these spine-friendly driving guidelines:

1. Accelerate slowly and smoothly (except when safety demands a sudden burst of speed).
2. Decelerate slowly and smoothly (except when safety demands a sudden stop).
3. Work the steering wheel as little as possible, consistent with the demands of safety.

Here’s an added benefit: spine-friendly driving incorporates major components of energy-efficient driving. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (www.eere.energy.gov/cleancities/fueleconomy/driving_tips.html), energy-efficient driving can improve your gas mileage 5-33%. So, spine-friendly driving can lower your expenses at the gas pump, alleviate air pollution, and reduce the nation’s dependence on imported oil.

It gets even better. Spine-friendly driving is the opposite of aggressive driving. In other words, the spine-friendly driver is at reduced risk of an accident.

One more thing: there is evidence in the research literature suggesting that chiropractic adjustments can improve reaction time and mental focus. (Much of this evidence is summarized in our textbook: *Somatovisceral Aspects of Chiropractic: An Evidence-Based Approach*, Churchill Livingstone, New York, 2001). It is probable that this improved reaction time and mental focus can improve the efficiency of the ordinary tasks of your everyday life, including your effort to practice spine-friendly driving.

Why not test this idea for yourself? (This down-to-earth experiment is most likely to be valid if it has been at least two weeks since your last adjustment.) Practice spine-friendly driving technique from now on. During the week before your next visit, check your gas mileage at least once or twice. (If you can manage three readings, the information would be of particular interest to us.) Then, continue to check your

mileage during the week after your adjustment. Let us know the results. (Ask us if you need instructions for calculating gas mileage.)

ANATOMY LESSON: The Neural Foramen

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The neural foramen is the opening formed between two vertebrae, through which the main branches of the spinal nerves (the nerve roots) leave the cord, carrying with them a little sleeve of the outermost meninge, the covering of your brain and spinal cord. From there, the nerves go on to branch out or combine with other nerves to bring your body the sensory and motor information required for healthy function.

Throughout the human body, there are not so much spaces as potential spaces, with structures fitting up against each other. The spinal nerve roots are not alone in their location. They share the potential space with blood and lymphatic vessels, a little fat for padding and, in some cases, tiny ligaments that cross the foramen. If the vertebrae forming the foramen are jammed together or not moving properly, pressure can end up being applied to the nerve, causing it to send the body less than perfect information, either too much or too little. This is what is commonly known as a “pinched nerve”. A bulging or herniated disc can also affect nerve transmission if it presses on the nerve or is partially occluding the foramen itself, as can arthritic spurs or “osteophytes”.

Nerves can be “pinched” in locations other than the spine (as is the case with carpal tunnel syndrome), but a malfunctioning spinal joint that somehow alters the foramen and the pressure within it is the most likely way to affect proper nerve function. Chiropractic seeks to remove the interference to the nerve by gently and non-invasively getting those spinal joints to function as properly as they are able, so the nerve can accurately transmit information again.

THE SEASONS: Six Suggestions to Help You and Your Spine Through Busy Times [Table of Contents](#) | [Top of page](#)

1. Garden and Yard

Break the chores into smaller blocks of time. This will enable you to get out of unaccustomed postures more frequently. This, in turn, will take some pressure off your spine. Check our website at www.neurologicalfitness.com to read more about peaceful co-existence with your gardening activities.

2. More Active In Cooler Weather?

The air will be getting much cooler and crisper, and you will have more opportunity to enjoy being outdoors. If you’ve been taking a break from outdoor exercise due to the heat and humidity, start back slowly. Take the time to do your warm-ups and cool-downs. This will allow your body to better deal with the sudden increased demands on your physiology.

3. Miles to Go

The season brings several reasons for long car rides. Whether you are taking the kids back to college, taking advantage of post-Labor Day

savings at the mountains or the shore or going over the river and through the woods for the holidays, get out of the car often. One of the most frequent complaints we hear from patients involves back and leg pain after sitting still for long periods. While sitting at your desk or in a long meeting can put additional pressure on your sacroiliacs and lower (lumbar) spine, the vibration of even a very sturdy vehicle makes you even more vulnerable. Your upper body can also take on strain as you get tired and your posture deteriorates into a forward lean. Remember to sit up straight while driving, and support your back. Use “pursed lip breathing” (see our most recent past newsletter) to support your abdominal muscles while getting in and out of the car if you are beginning to feel stiffness, soreness or pain. Your abdominal muscles will, in turn, help support your low back.

4. Gift Wrapping

So, after a long work day, you did some baking and went shopping, and now you’re going to wrap everything. You can make this not only a healthier, but more enjoyable activity if you will pay a little attention to the increased demands on your feet and spine. Wear good shoes, maybe even with gel soles, while you are shopping. Walking for long periods on concrete or marble floors in a mall is not the equivalent of a leisurely walk in the country on natural surfaces, but taking care of your feet can help prevent you from transmitting the “concrete concussiveness” to your spine. When wrapping gifts, it is not as efficient as you might think to sit on the floor with the gifts, papers and trimmings between your legs while you hover above them. You’ll do your spine, including your neck, a big favor by clearing off a table and placing the project on it. You can then sit or stand for the task ahead. This will get you out of a very awkward position.

5. Get Your Snow Shovel Now...

...if you don’t have one already. This way, you don’t end up looking for a (sold out!) shovel at the first sign of snow fall and resort to using things like kitchenware and tennis rackets to scoop yourself out. For more suggestions on how to shovel snow with your spine’s best interests at heart, visit our website (www.neurologicalfitness.com) for past articles on the subject.

6. Meteor Gazing

The Leonid meteor shower in mid-November can put on a spectacular pre-New Year show. To enjoy it in comfort and consideration for your back and neck, make sure you are dressed warmly. You may even want a blanket. This will keep your muscles from cramping while you are mostly standing or sitting still in the cold air. If you are going to be out watching for a while, try using a lounge chair, moon roof or stretching out in the back of a truck if you have access to one, so you can support your neck and look up without antagonizing your spine and its many structures.

Chiropractic Independence Day? [Table of Contents](#) | [Top of page](#)

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 [Table of Contents](#) | [Top of page](#)

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 is happy to answer your questions on these programs.

See the Show! [Table of Contents](#) | [Top of page](#)

This spring, Dr. Masarsky was interviewed by local television producer and director Leigh Weber. The topic, of course was chiropractic. We have DVDs of this program available for you to borrow. This informative show is a good one to share with a friend or relative not familiar with chiropractic. Not only will many of their questions be answered, but also they will see an actual adjustment performed on the air. Ask Helga or Lisa for details.

Sounds Like A Sneeze, Feels Like A Whiplash
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If you think about the “ah-choo” movement of your head when you sneeze, you will note the resemblance between this and the motion of a person’s head during a whiplash injury. During a bad cold, flu or allergy attack, repetitive sneezing can create spinal problems very similar to the ones suffered by whiplash victims. If you have been having a bad bout of sneezing for any reason, we suggest you make an appointment to have your spine checked.

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We’d like to express our appreciation to participants in our raffle earlier this year. Our donation to America’s Second Harvest was earmarked for Hurricane Katrina survivors. To continue your support for hurricane survivors, or to contribute to hunger relief in general, send your donations to America’s Second Harvest, 35 E.Wacker Street, Chicago, IL 60601 (1-800-771-2303).

Thanks For Your Referrals [Table of Contents](#) | [Top of page](#)

We’d like to thank those of you who have been referring family, friends and co-workers. We appreciate your thinking of us when you know someone who you feel could benefit from chiropractic care. For a health care provider, referral is the sincerest form of flattery.

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