

# VIENNA CHIROPRACTIC NEWS

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## CALENDAR

<b>Sep 2:</b> Closed for Labor Day <b>7,12:</b> Open for Saturday Hours <b>16:</b> Chiropractic Independence Day	<b>Dec 7:</b> Open for Saturday Hours <b>16:</b> Chiropractic Independence Day <b>24-1/3:</b> Closed: Winter Holiday <b>30:</b> Catch-up Day: Office Open
<b>Oct 2:</b> Closed at 5:00 pm: Rosh Hashana <b>5,19:</b> Open for Saturday Hours <b>11:</b> Closed at 5:00 pm: Yom Kippur <b>21:</b> Chiropractic Independence Day	<b>Jan 3:</b> Office Reopens; Welcome Back! <b>4,18:</b> Open for Saturday Hours <b>20:</b> Chiropractic Independence Day
<b>Nov 1:</b> Office opens at 3:00 pm <b>2,16:</b> Open for Saturday Hours <b>18:</b> Chiropractic Independence Day <b>28-30:</b> Closed: Thanksgiving	<b><u>STANDARD HOURS OF OPERATION</u></b> M-W-F: 10:00-1:00 & 3:00-6:00 Sat: 9:00-noon (selected Saturdays) Tue/Thu/Sun: Emergencies Only

## Low-Tech Innovation

When most people think of American healthcare innovation, what usually comes to mind is the development of a new drug or the invention of a new device. While these are impressive, some of the most important innovations are not of that sort. Important innovations are often the result of new awareness of how to use the natural gifts of human senses, hands, and minds. Some of these low-tech breakthroughs have proven to be substantial contributions to world health.

Rapid diagnosis of abdominal pain can be crucial in deciding how to deal with the patient. American surgeon Dr. Charles McBurney found a point in the right lower abdomen that quickly identifies acute appendicitis. He described the method of finding and using this point in an 1889 publication. Today, McBurney's point is still used by the world's doctors.

American surgeon Dr. Henry Heimlich first described his maneuver in 1974. This simple technique has saved the lives of countless choking victims. In a 1990 CNN interview with Larry

King, Dr. Heimlich stated, “We believe that you can solve many seemingly complex problems with direct, simple methods”.

New York anesthesiologist Dr. Virginia Apgar became concerned with the mortality rate of newborns during the first 24 hours of life. Using some of the same factors an anesthesiologist monitors during surgery, she developed a quick way of assessing the newborn’s health status. What we now know as the Apgar score was described in a 1952 seminar followed by publication in 1953.

When a Commander in Chief suffers from severe chronic pain, reducing this pain without mind-dulling drugs is a matter of national security. American physician Dr. Janet Travell developed innovative methods to relieve pain by treating active nodules of painful tissue known as myofascial trigger points. She began this work in the 1940s and continued until her death in 1997. While a bit of technology was involved with her spray-and-stretch techniques, her identification of trigger points depended on skillful use of the practitioner’s sense of touch. In 1961, Dr. Travell became the personal physician to President John F. Kennedy. His successor Lyndon B. Johnson retained Dr. Travell in that position. Today, the treatment of myofascial trigger points is common around the world.

Dr. Travell’s work was paralleled by the career of American chiropractor Dr. Raymond Nimmo, who developed the hands-on method he named Receptor Tonus technique. This technique addresses the same myofascial trigger points investigated by Dr. Travell. Nimmo probably began developing his technique in the 1940s and began actively teaching by the 1950s. Today, this and similar techniques are often used along with chiropractic adjustments.

Chiropractic care was controversial in Dr. Nimmo’s time. Today, however, chiropractic practitioners and colleges can be found on all six inhabited continents.

Drs. Todres and Masarsky are pleased to be contributors to low-tech innovation. Please visit [www.viennachiropractic.com](http://www.viennachiropractic.com), click on “About the Doctors”, and scroll down to find a list of our published papers.

## **WHAT IS THAT IN THE CRATE?**

You mean the black crate on the reception area table? That is our own Very Little Library. Health is more than just physical although that’s usually the first place we acknowledge

that there could be a problem. We've got to exercise our minds too. Enter the Very Little Library. It consists of books and magazines that we and the other members of our patient community have enjoyed or puzzled over and are now ready to send on to new homes.

### **What's it for?**

Think of it as an equipment room the contents of which exercise and expand your mind. Learn something new, commune with very intelligent and creative folks or take a trip through time, space and more without having to leave home (although these are real, physical books and you can read them under a shady tree or at water's edge).

### **How Does it Work?**

When you're in the office, look over the contents of the crate. (It might even have a sister crate by the time you read this). If something interests you, take it home. Take another in case you read fast. That is now your book or magazine, to be read at your leisure and either kept or passed on to a friend. It's free and it's yours. We invite all of you to contribute books you enjoyed but are unlikely to read again. Save some of that valuable real estate on your bookshelves (make room for your VLL newcomers) and save money on new reading materials.

## **COCCYX: WHERE THE END IS ALSO A BEGINNING**

At the lower end of the spine is the remnant of what was once a tailbone in the human evolutionary past – the coccyx. In a number of ways, this bone at spine's end is also a beginning. In the meridian system of acupuncture, it is near the origin of the governing vessel. In yoga and ayurvedic healing, the coccyx is located near the root chakra (muladhara chakra), the first of seven energy centers. In both of these major Asian healing systems, coccygeal misalignment is seen as a potential disruptor of many systems of the body. Western health science has also long understood the importance of this bone.

### ***Common Symptoms***

Probably the most common symptom of coccyx misalignment is pain at the tailbone – coccydynia. This tailbone pain can include the anus and sex organs, causing difficulty with bowel movements and intercourse. Back pain is another frequent manifestation.

### ***Trauma and Posture***

The most sudden cause of coccyx misalignment is landing on the buttocks during a slip-and-fall accident. This type of trauma can drive the coccyx forward, often with a left or right shift in position.

Less obvious is the slow-motion trauma of the sitting position. A slumped posture while sitting for long periods of time can distort coccygeal position, especially if seated on a hard surface.

Women in their third trimester of pregnancy are particularly vulnerable to this postural coccydynia. This is due to the action of the hormone relaxin, which loosens the ligaments of the pelvis in preparation for childbirth. This undoubtedly is one of the reasons for the statistical finding that women suffer from coccydynia more frequently than men. However, this statistical finding remains valid among women and adolescent girls who have never experienced pregnancy, suggesting additional reasons for this gender difference.

### ***A Neurological Joining***

Climbing the left and right sides of the vertebral column like a vine of ivy climbing the tower of a college building is a chain of nerve structures. These structures are part of the sympathetic nervous system, which controls the “fight or flight” function of human organ systems. This left and right chain join at the front of the coccyx in a nerve structure called the ganglion impar (from the Latin, meaning “odd bundle”). The importance of this neurological joining is well-known within the chiropractic profession.

A published case report is a case in point. After a “sit-down” fall, a 12-year-old girl suffered from low back pain and loss of bladder control. A series of four chiropractic visits including adjustments to correct coccygeal function brought relief from both symptoms.

Due to the connection of the ganglion impar to the chain of sympathetic nerve structures, coccyx misalignment can disturb organs not located within the pelvis. The author of a chiropractic textbook reported cases in which tachycardia (rapid heart rate) increased during bowel movements. In considering a possible cause, the author suggested that these patients were experiencing the effects of compression of the ganglion impar between a misaligned coccyx and the passing bowel movement. The resulting disturbance included the portion of the sympathetic chain in control of heart rate.

### ***Tough But Sensitive Tissue***

Surrounding and protecting the brain and spinal cord, the meninges consist of several layers of tissue envelopes. The outer layer is particularly tough, but it is also very sensitive to pain. It is called the dura mater (Latin for “tough mother”).

A cord of resilient connective tissue tethers the dura mater to the coccyx. Understandably, coccyx misalignment can disturb the dura mater, potentially causing or aggravating back pain, neck pain, or headache.

### ***Prevention***

As noted above, chiropractic adjustments can help restore normal coccygeal function. When more invasive intervention is required, injections can sedate the pain of coccydynia, and surgery can stabilize the bone in a more normal position. However, prevention is always first.

To begin with, avoid long periods of sitting on a hard surface, especially in a slumped position. While this can cause coccyx problems for anyone, overweight people and women in their third trimester of pregnancy are particularly vulnerable.

When sitting for long periods of time is unavoidable, use a cushion. If you already have coccydynia, a cushion with a hole in the middle (often called a “donut pillow”) can take pressure off the sensitized coccyx.

In terms of exercise, it is important to know that the gluteus maximus muscle attaches to the back of the coccyx. Therefore, toning this muscle helps prevent forward misalignment, and can help restore normal alignment. A simple exercise for this muscle is to stand with good straight posture while holding onto a kitchen counter or a sturdy piece of furniture. Maintaining good posture, bring one leg as far back as you comfortably can without bending your knee. Hold this extended position for a count of 10. Then, repeat with the other leg. When it becomes easy to do this, work up to 10 repetitions or more. Stair-climbing is another form of exercise that tones the gluteus maximus, especially if you can take the stairs two at a time. To modify exercise for your personal situation, call for a consult.

A traditional yogic exercise that is helpful for the coccyx is the child’s pose. Kneel on a mat or other soft surface, with your buttocks sitting back on the heels. Place both hands on the floor, then slowly slide the arms and body forward without pulling the buttocks up from the heels. When you have gone as far forward as you comfortably can, hold the position for 20-30

seconds. This will create a good stretch, which you should feel to some extent in your tailbone area.

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## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH CLASSES**

As part of our commitment to community education, we offer a series of courses on Tuesdays, 10:00-11:00 am at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. There is no charge. To register online, establish an account at <http://www.viennava.gov/webtrac>. For questions about the registration process, call the Vienna Community Center at 703-255-6360. Upcoming:

Building a Better Neck	September 10
Mouth-Tongue Exercises for Better Sleep	October 8
Building Better Knees	November 12
Breathing Exercises for better Brain Function	December 10

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We offer one year of free chiropractic care to those returning from service in a combat area in the past five years. Contact us for further details.

**Please remember our veterans on November 11 (Veterans Day) and every day!**

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## **AFFORDABLE CARE**

Our Chiropractic Independence Days and multipacks are part of our effort to make chiropractic care accessible and affordable for all. Please get in touch for information on these programs.

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