

# Clearing Up Myths About Chiropractic...

In this *Healthy Note* we get to the bottom of common misconceptions about chiropractic and your spinal health!

## Chiropractors Only Treat Back Pain

Chiropractors provide effective treatment for all types of soft tissue disorders and not just back and neck ailments. This includes conditions of the joints of the extremities like the ankle, knee and shoulder.

What you may not be aware of is chiropractic's success in treating a number of non-soft tissue conditions like dysmenorrhea (painful menses), ulcers, migraine headaches, and ear infections in children. While we cannot claim to cure these conditions, we believe that many of these problems can be mimicked, aggravated and some times caused by disruptions in the nervous system as a result of spinal abnormalities. By correcting these spinal abnormalities like the vertebral subluxation, chiropractic has helped thousands of individuals overcome these conditions and regain control of their lives.



## Can I adjust myself?

Chiropractors often hear, "I knew it was time to come see you Doc, because I couldn't get my back to pop by myself anymore." This kind of statement makes chiropractors everywhere cringe. Let's set the record straight on "self-adjustments."

The truth is, they're not really adjustments at all. Can we "pop" ourselves and relieve pressure on certain joints in our bodies? Sure. Can we adjust the joints correctly, or more importantly, can we do it to the right ones? Absolutely not.

Think back to science class. You learned that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is an undisputed law. The same applies to our bodies. We are a continually shifting and changing complex machine. In turn, our body works to compensate for everything we do. Every action we take relies on something else to balance out what has just happened be it walking, pushing, pulling, sitting or standing. If the ability to do these things is somehow impaired, the body will recruit other muscles, tendons and joints to assist. That's how the machine works.

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Now let's say you have done something to injure or alter that machine's ability to do the task it is asked to do. The body will continue to do the job to the best of its ability, but it will look for help. When it does this it places more stress on some joints and less on others. This causes these joints to either move more or less, depending on what is asked of them. Joints with limited movement, when stressed, will produce pain. Joints with increased motion will become unstable. This is where the problem lies.

People believe that just the "popping" of a joint signifies that they have "adjusted" themselves and therefore have taken care of the problem. In reality, what they are doing is making the joints that are less mobile even tighter and the joints that are more mobile looser. This leads to instability. This is often masked by the release of endorphins. Endorphines act as a pain killer, and they are released when we exercise, or are injured. Chemically they resemble opiates, so their pain-killing effect can be quite strong. And, they are released when a joint is "cracked". This is what happens when you "pop" or attempt to adjust yourself, thus masking the injury you have actually caused. Have you or someone you know just been doing normal things when their back suddenly "locked up"? More times than not this isn't a sudden onset of this situation, but a long standing one. People have been and continue "popping" themselves thinking they are helping themselves when in reality they are becoming an accident waiting to happen.

When a Chiropractor adjusts you, he or she has determined which spinal segment or segments are less mobile. The adjustment they provide is designed to balance out the motion in the joint or joints affected to return the human machine closer to its normal capacity and remove nerve interference, not to simply "pop" your back to see how much gas they can release between the joints. There lies the difference. Outside assistance will aid the body in returning to its normal health. Self-induced "popping" will send the body to eventual trouble.

Perhaps the best example is your very own chiropractor. With all his or her experience, does he or she attempt to adjust his or her self? Likely not.



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