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**Healthy Concepts**

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### **How Spinal Adjustments Help Relieve Pain**

The spinal vertebrae house and protect the nervous system. Nerves exit the vertebrae and travel to all parts of the body from head to toe. The vertebrae, however, can become stuck in an abnormal position, interfering not only with nerve flow, but also the flow of blood, and lymph. This can affect many parts and functions of the body, including the experience of pain and discomfort. There are at least three broad situations in which the body registers pain:

- a) pressure on a nerve
- b) restricted blood flow (aka “ischemia”)
- c) chemical toxins or waste products

**Nerves** bring messages from brain to body and vice versa and register different sensations – sight, smell, sound, temperature, pressure, pain, etc.

**Blood** brings oxygen and nutrients (vitamins, minerals, etc.) throughout the body and picks up waste products that can be recycled or discarded from the body.

**Lymph** vessels manage foreign invaders and help carry out waste products, toxins, and microorganisms.

These three types of vessels: nerve fibers, arteries and veins, and lymph vessels, for the most part follow each other closely throughout the body and are in very close proximity to each other next to the spine.

When the vertebrae are “adjusted” back into normal positioning and movement, not only is pressure relieved from the nerves, but also from the blood and lymph vessels. This is why a person may feel heat or relief from pressure directly after an adjustment, or soreness (from release of waste

products or toxins) a day or two later. As you can see, spinal adjustments can alleviate pain by clearing the causes of pain on a tissue level.

## Triad of Health

In my first newsletter, I talked about the concept of “vitalism,” including among other things, the idea that body and mind cannot be separated. The founder of chiropractic, D.D. Palmer, certainly included this within his philosophy when he said, “...Disease may be caused by injuries or poisons or from the mind.” This principle later came to be called the Triad of Health. This Triad is represented by a triangle, with “structure” at the base, and “biochemistry/nutrition” and “mental/emotional” at the other two sides. This model states that each side of the triangle affects the other two sides.

Let’s take, for example, the idea that your thoughts and emotions affect your body’s structure. If you are worried about something, your muscles tighten up. If this goes on for some time it can pull vertebrae out of alignment, causing pain or discomfort in your back, neck, or head.

On the other hand, if you are all slumped over, stressing your neck and back, it can contribute to feeling emotionally low and unmotivated. Straightening up and squaring your shoulders can help elevate your mood and raise your energy.

I have had many times when I was adjusting a person’s back, balancing their muscles, or doing CranioSacral therapy where they experienced an emotional release of some kind. For instance, one person felt her depression lift and another surprisingly felt tears come to her eyes.

Our bodies truly are phenomenal. Everything is connected and intertwined structurally, nutritionally, and psychologically. All sides need to be considered when looking for the cause and treating a condition, especially if it’s chronic.

## Calling All Feet

Our feet are the structural foundation on which we stand. When our feet hurt, it affects our entire body, causing us to droop, slow down, become unmotivated, or just plain tired. Misalignments in the feet, poor arches, or improperly fitted shoes can lead to foot problems or even ankle, knee, hip, and pelvic problems. If you or someone you know is suffering from painful or uncomfortable feet, I invite you/them to come in for an evaluation and treatment at half the usual cost during January and February 2007. Bring this newsletter or mention the discount at the time of your visit. (Regular fee is approximately \$100 per hour. This does not include the cost of orthotics if needed – usually \$190 to \$350, for 2 pair.)

Included in the **evaluation** will be the following:

1. Check for foot misalignments and balance from one foot to the other.
2. Evaluation of arches and any foot problems you may have.
3. Check to see if the pelvis or low back is contributing to foot pain.

Treatment may include one or some of the following:

1. Adjustment of the feet or spine.
2. Foot massage.
3. Orthotics casting.
4. Shoe recommendations.
5. Home care recommendations.

## More Information

To learn more about the vitalistic model of health and the mind-body connection, you may want to visit these websites:

[www.enchantedmind.com/html/science/creative\\_emotion.html](http://www.enchantedmind.com/html/science/creative_emotion.html) (Look under “science”, then “creative emotion.”) This article refers to Dr. Candace Pert’s book, *Molecules of Emotion*. Dr. Pert’s research gives scientific evidence for what bodyworkers have noticed for years; i.e., that emotions are stored all over the body, not just in the brain.

[www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com) (Check out “Man or Machine: the Vitalistic Model of Health” and other articles about chiropractic.) This article talks about the spark of life that makes us more than just machines.

[www.committment.com/brownstein.html](http://www.committment.com/brownstein.html) This is a fascinating interview with Dr. Art Brownstein, who recovered from excruciating back pain by looking deeply into himself to find the cause of his pain. I recommend this book, *Healing Back Pain Naturally: the Mind-Body Program Proven to Work*.