

Care for the physical dimension- Chiropractic care and muscle work.

Your care will involve rebalancing your physical structure, enough to take the excessive stress off of your system, so that your body can heal itself. We do this by combining physical treatment methods, using chiropractic care as the cornerstone, but supported by muscular work.

Chiropractic care is the cornerstone

Chiropractic care is aimed at restoring normal movement to joints, traditionally the spine, but any joint in the body can receive chiropractic care. We restore movement by using adjustments- specific outside forces to gently move joints into a full or fuller range of motion. Although this seems like a simple approach, the implications of doing this are deeply profound, as all joints are highly innervated structures (they have lots of nerve supply, and connect deeply into the nervous system, and hence, the brain). When we restore normal or increased motion to a joint, this sends a message to the brain, which in turn changes the tone (or signal) to the muscles that surround that joint, and control its motion. This can change strength, relax muscle spasms, and change flexibility, and even alter posture. As well, because it connects back into the nervous system, which connects to the organs of the body, it can change the tone of the whole body, causing it to relax, or to tonify, depending on its need. I liken chiropractic care to a system reset, where the body returns to its normal, balanced state.

Muscles need to be considered

Although the chiropractic adjustment will change the muscular structure around that joint, the muscles themselves frequently need to be directly addressed. Muscles are the main movers of joints. There are always at least two muscles for every joint, as muscles only do one thing- contract. A single muscle produces movement in one direction, so there must be another, opposite muscle to bring the joint back to the other direction. This is where the idea of balance comes from; the opposing but balanced pull of muscles on a joint. Every joint has a neutral position where it is in a balanced state, and the muscles stay relaxed, ready to produce strength and flexibility whenever needed. If posture, trauma, or positions cause that joint to be in an "other than neutral" position, than the muscles around that joint become unbalanced; one muscle will shorten, the other will lengthen. An imbalanced muscle is no longer relaxed, and it starts to do what it was designed to do- contract. When a muscle contracts, it restricts its incoming and outgoing blood supply. This blood supplies the muscle with oxygen and nutrients it needs to work, and removes the cellular waste products of this work that it does. If this supply is restricted for too long of a time, the muscle becomes starved of its food, and it can't get rid of its waste products- a perfect storm for a muscle, at which point it will become irritated, and create more pull. Keep a muscle starved for too long, and it literally starts to die, and the elastic tissue of the muscle is replaced by fibrous tissue, which is scar tissue. The key to keeping a muscle in great shape is to keep the joint it controls in a neutral position, and to keep its blood supply working properly. The muscle work that we do here at the clinic is designed to restore better blood supply to the muscles of the joints that we work on, and to restore the normal length and tone to those muscles. We do this through specific massage techniques to improve the blood supply, and stretches and exercises to restore the normal length and

tone to muscles. As well, we may demonstrate how to do your own muscle work at home, to help our work here at the office, and to speed your recovery and balance.

Stretching restores normal length to muscles

The stretches we do at the office are very specific to the muscles around a joint, or a body part, and are intense- after using specific touching or massage techniques to bring blood to the muscles around the joint(s) that we are working on, we want to restore the normal length to those muscles. The stretches use specific techniques to get the muscle to relax and lengthen. This helps to bring the joint/muscle complex back to a neutral position, where everything is relaxed, and can best heal. We may show you how to do your own stretching at home, to help our work here at the office, and to speed your recovery and balance.

Exercise:

Strengthening exercises address any weak muscles we find during your examination. If a joint is out of neutral position for too long, and the blood supply is not adequate, muscles can become weakened. By using specific exercises to get that muscle working fully and properly again, we can bring that joint and muscle complex back to normal position and tone. If your problem has a physical imbalance, your program will include specific stretching and strengthening exercises to help you recover better. As you improve, we have other options available to you to help you gain overall strength, flexibility, coordination, balance, and endurance, depending on your level of interest and your needs and goals.