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Dr. Jeff Donahue's Health Yourself Newsletter

“Measure and Improve Your Health and Wellness”

Who we are...

Welcome to the “Health Yourself” newsletter. I would like to be your resource for helping you obtain and maintain the health and wellness you desire.

What I offer is a way to test the balance within each dimension of your life, and ways to improve that dimension. I believe that your body is an incredible healing machine, and there is no greater machine, drug, procedure or doctor that can heal your body better than itself. However, your body can only accomplish this without interference, as stresses on the body can become too great, and then create an overload.

My goal is to expose you to concepts of health and wellness that you might not normally consider throughout your day, but are vital to increasing your health and wellness.

The gift of pain or dysfunction.

You may be finding that something in your body is not working as well as you would prefer, or that you are in pain.

Perhaps you have even sought some treatment methods to address these issues, either conventional or alternative, but they did not resolve your condition to your satisfaction.

We are miracles...

Our bodies are marvel of miracles- so much so that the best of science doesn't fully understand how they work or the interplay of its many systems and dimensions. What we do know is that the body is designed to heal and repair itself, and does so many times during the day in response to the many insults, imbalances, and stressors to which we are constantly exposed. A cut to the finger stops bleeding, scabs and heals with minimum scarring. Sore joints magically work again without pain. Tight muscles stretch and relax. A tainted meal is expelled, and we go back to eating without issue the next day. We suffer heartbreak from the loss of a loved one, but find love once again after a grieving process. Our body is SUPPOSED to heal itself. Intervention need only start when your body doesn't naturally do what it is was designed to do.

A time to pause...

When we don't repair, we now have the opportunity to examine our bodies, lives and lifestyles in order to understand what is keeping us from healing. I believe that it is a disservice to just get rid of your pain without considering why it is there. The imbalance or stress that creates that pain is most likely still there after we are through with the symptoms (like taking a pain pill). When we mask or only treat the symptoms, we ignore the cause, which drives the condition deeper within our bodies. The symptoms may be gone, but the condition remains, and it is only a matter of time before it shows up again-possibly as the same symptoms, or perhaps something else, maybe even worse.

What is the pain, dysfunction or illness trying to teach us? What is the lesson for me? What part or parts of my life aren't in balance? What methods are available and which ones will I use to help me identify and understand what is going on? These are the questions that come to mind when I am faced with health challenges, as we all are. The goal of health is not to prevent pain, dysfunction, or illness, but to use it as a tool to understand how we may improve the dimensions of our lives, to lead to a greater connection with ourselves, our families, friends, co-workers and community. Those in true health weather the occasional stormy seas, and come out with more wisdom about

strategies for continued improvement and growth.

Dis-ease vs. disease...

True health recognizes that you participate in your healing process. It requires you to take action, to change what needs to be changed, to move you towards better health. I think we can all agree that we would want these actions to take place earlier in any dis-ease process. I hyphenate this nasty word as a reminder that symptoms occur only after a time being out of balance, when we lose our "ease" of existing. If we intervene at a point early enough after the loss of balance, we don't necessarily have to have all or any symptoms or illness. Ideally, I would want to know about my current level of health, and, more importantly, in which direction I am moving toward- less wellness, or more.

I get tested frequently with very sensitive indicators that let me know when my systems are under stress. These tools show me any imbalances, and where I am headed. The direct feedback is not only helpful in showing me how well my current wellness program is doing, but increases my own sensitivity and connection with my body. Much like how a mirror can help you improve your posture. This connection to my body is part of my wellness program, and my health is better because of this action. How well

are you, and in which direction are you headed?

Your spiritual alignment

If part of your life consists of being in the spiritual realm (which is part of the energetic/emotional dimension), how do you find your relationship with spirit? Do you follow your intuitive advice? Do you feel a connection with something greater than yourself, and other people? Are your relationships with your loved one, your family, your fellow workers and customers, and your community as close and as meaningful as you would like?

Connection...

These are questions that speak to the quality of that connection with spirit, the alignment of spirit with yourself. If we are aligned, than we expect a great communion with what Wayne Dyer refers to as the "stream" of life. If you've ever been there, than you know well that sensation; life seems to unfold before us, and we walk into it like stepping onto clouds. We sense that oneness of all things, that we all are from one, and we begin to see how the dance of life is choreographed, from a higher view. Life seems to put on our path all that we need at the moment, and we have no fear, but a great gratitude for the state we are in. In my life, I experience this sensation with some regularity, but I would love to live in this state.

I believe that we are really spirits having human experiences, not the other way around. But I also know that this experience is defined by human limitations, and to derive the most from this trip we need to ensure, first, that there is nothing that interferes with that spiritual connection (so we get the big picture), and second, we can grow that spiritual connection to it's greatest potential. This only enhances our human experience. So what does chiropractic wellness care have to do with this?

Wellness care...

Chiropractic was first founded on the principle that the body is able to heal itself, as long as it is free of interferences. What the founder of chiropractic, DD Palmer, envisioned was that by removing subluxations of the vertebrae of the spine, which are fixations of the bones of the spine. These are the same bones that form the boney coverings to protect the spinal cord and the nervous system. He understood that any stress on the nervous system could slow or stop communication between the brain and millions of cells that control how the body moves and functions. Most importantly he believed that that the brain and nervous system was only a receptacle for messages from our creator, and saw his job of removing these interferences as a way of opening the body to allow spirit to flow within and guide us. He saw chiropractic as

restoring the connection between ourselves and God.

As important as the nervous system is the energetic system, by which the essence of spirit traverses our bodies. The eastern people called this energy chi, and the channels are termed Meridians. Again, this system must work without interference for the body to express the balanced flow of chi. And, let's not forget the biochemical system, which breaks food down to supply our cells, and removes the wastes. This too is a flow of essential energy and circulation, and it is the balance of these dimensions of energies, working without interference, that allows our bodies to connect with the rhythm of life.

All of these systems can be measured for balance and interferences, and we have the ability through a number of possible methods and exercises to restore your connections, literally clearing the way for spirit to guide us. Will balancing these systems ensure that you will make a strong connection with spirit? No, not for sure, but trying to feel and connect with life's flow is challenging enough without these stresses on your body and mind.

Lower back, hip and/or leg pain?

Assessing and correcting your hip flexor muscle flexibility.

The hip flexor muscle is a commonly involved muscle when there are problems with trunk and lower back stability. Do you have chronic lower back pain? Does your back feel weak when you move into certain positions? Do you have trouble standing after sitting for a period of time?

In all of these situations, the hip flexor muscle can be involved, and the most common issue is one of shortening. Remember that muscles are living tissues, and will adapt to the length that they are held at, especially if they are held for an extended period of time. The hip flexors attach to the front side of the spine of the lower back (behind your abdominal muscles), and cross deeply through the front of the pelvis and hip to insert on the upper part of the inside leg- literally the groin. These muscles perform...guess what... Hip Flexion! They bring the knees up toward the chest, or the chest down toward the knees. The hip flexor group actually consists of two muscles above the hip joint- the psoas muscle (which attaches to the spine), and the iliacus (which attaches to the inside of the illium (hip) bones). Below the hip it forms one muscle called the illiopsoas. As we can call a muscle by its action or it's

anatomical name, it is easier in this case to refer to this group as the hip flexors.

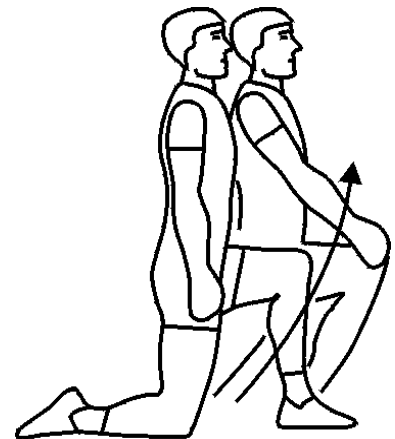
So, as we know, the hip flexors will shorten if they are held in a shortened position, the most common being sitting. This is such a large and powerful muscle group that they can pull and change the curve of the lower back, as well as rotating the hips and the legs to turn out. When these muscles shorten, they dominate in the movement patterns of the lower back, which will create weaknesses in other muscles, as well as putting stress on the spinal joints and hip joints. This creates an unbalanced situation, which means the area is unstable, and damage can occur from muscles spasms to herniated discs. How do you tell if these muscles are shortened? The easiest way to measure if your hip flexors are tight is to sit at the very edge of your bed, or a sturdy table. Grab under one of your legs and pull it to your chest, as you let your upper body relax on the bed. Your knee should be tight to your chest, as you are lying on your back. Let your other leg totally relax. Either look yourself, or

have someone else note what position your relaxed thigh (upper leg) is in. If your knee is angled down toward the floor, your hip flexors are normal length (fully flexibility). If your knee points straight out or angles upward (thigh will be flat, or it will point up toward the ceiling), your hip flexor has shortened. The higher the knee from the bed or platform (the more it angles upward), the tighter the hip flexor. Sit back upright, and repeat on the opposite side. It is not unusual for one side to be tighter than the other.

The following stretch is one of the most effective home stretches I've used in my twenty years of practice. It's called the kneeling hip flexor stretch. The picture does a lot to explain, but there are subtleties of this that make all the difference. Make sure that when you are in the kneeling position your hips are pointing straight ahead. It is the leg that you are kneeling on that is the one being stretched. Push your hips forward by tightening your buttock (glut) muscles. It should feel that you are pushing your lower buttock cheeks forward. Keep

your buttocks tight, and you will feel a stretch in the front part of the leg possibly extending up from the knee all the way into the groin. You may not feel it in all of these areas, but it should feel like you are opening up the front of your hip. Once you feel a stretch (and are continuing to tighten your buttocks), hold the stretch for 30-40 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times on both sides.

Keep this up for 2-3 weeks daily, and you should see a difference in how flexible you are, and a decrease in any pain you are having. Make sure to get things checked if this seems to make things worse, or if your pain doesn't change.



\$40 to \$125 Savings!

Save 50% off your first visit with Dr. Donahue.

Good through November 2009. Just mention this offer when you come in for your first visit.