

[IMAGE]

## Maximizing Your Chiropractic Experience

By Perry Nickelston, DC, FMS, SFMA

*Back pain* - the very words send a chill down your spine. Pun intended. The first thought many people have when they hear those words is, "chiropractor." Maybe they have personally used chiropractic to recover from episodes of back pain or know of someone who has. Chiropractic is a proven method of reducing the signs, symptoms and underlying spinal dysfunctions associated with lower back pain. However, there are many other professional services a Doctor of Chiropractic can provide to help you optimize a lifetime of health and wellness. Nutrition, exercise, normalizing posture, and weight loss are just a few ways chiropractors can add that extra touch to helping you feel better. Many chiropractors have specialization in the chosen branch of health they are passionate about and have invested additional years of education in becoming the best in that arena. Examples include specialization in pediatrics, neurology, orthopedics, rehabilitation, sports medicine and nutrition. You are about to discover some helpful tips that will help you maximize your chiropractic experience for lifetime health.

The most important part of maximizing your experience is ensuring you choose the best chiropractor for your needs. When looking for a chiropractor, a good place to start is to ask your primary care physician or spine specialist for the names of chiropractors they work with personally. It also helps to ask friends, co-workers and neighbors for recommendations. It is such a highly personalized relationship you will have with your doctor, and getting a first-hand referral is the best way to ensure success. Not all chiropractors offer the same services or have the same level of expertise. Find the individual style and communication skills of the doctor that best relates to you. Is the chiropractor friendly and courteous? Does the chiropractic doctor truly listen and relate to your situation? Does the chiropractor fully answer all your questions? Do you feel rushed or hurried during the initial evaluation and first several treatments? Do you feel comfortable talking with the chiropractor? Selecting any health care professional for treatment is something that should be done with care. Do not feel compelled to be treated by the first chiropractic doctor you visit. Many people interview several chiropractors before finding one best suited to treat their condition.

chiropractic health - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Most chiropractors offer equipment that can help improve your quality of life and assist with activities of daily living such as bending, lifting, twisting,

exercising, sleeping, etc. Ask your chiropractor about purchasing spinal support belts to help when lifting objects or working on your feet for long hours. Orthotic foot supports are very prevalent in most chiropractic offices and this is a cost effective way to help sore feet, achy muscles, and fatigued lower backs. Braces and wraps can be used for arm and leg problems such as knee and elbow pain. Most doctors offer hot or cold packs for home use and topical analgesic pain relief lotions that are more effective than over the counter options. Make sure you ask your doctor about using some of these devices to maximize your progress. If you don't see them offered, simply ask them to order some for you or begin selling them to patients. Many insurance companies will cover the expense of these products in conjunction with proper documentation and rehabilitation programs from your chiropractor.

Dietary and nutritional supplements are an integral part of many chiropractic offices. Doctors of Chiropractic realize that extra weight on your body adds to additional stresses on your spine. This additional weight makes you biomechanically more susceptible to injury and greater risk for health problems. Not to mention the emotional pain associated with being overweight and the underlying desire to look our best. Starting a weight loss program under the supervision of a healthcare professional has a greater likelihood of long term success. Ask your doctor about nutritional supplements that may be helpful in reaching your intended goal. If your doctor does not carry supplements, bring in ones you are planning to take and ask their advice. When you walk into a health food store it can be overwhelming where to begin in choosing the best product for you. Simply ask your chiropractor to solidify your decision or the recommendation made by the health food store. Do you suffer from arthritis or other chronic inflammatory conditions? There are many supplements to help the symptoms of pain and inflammation associated with arthritis. Schedule a consultation with your chiropractor to discuss exercises and supplements that are safe and beneficial for your individual condition.

Chiropractors are experts at analyzing posture and how it relates to spinal problems. They are trained in the art of detection, function, and restoration. A doctor of chiropractic searches for the problems that exist underneath poor posture and its effect on quality of life movement dysfunction. By analyzing spinal curvatures and alignment, the doctor searches for the problems that contribute to the postural pattern and develops a strategy of correction. Outward muscular postural changes add up to changes in spinal and nervous system function. Your brain must now adapt to these altered posture patterns which leads to chronic movement dysfunctions increasing the likelihood of future injury. Based on individual needs your chiropractor can design a program of correction for you to help improve posture. Targeted exercises and

movements will be designed to optimize muscular efficiency so you are less prone to fatigue. Poor posture leads to inefficient movement patterns which increase muscular fatigue, decrease endurance and stress the energy systems of your body. In essence you are tired and achy all the time, which does not bode well for exercise. Poor energy systems decrease your metabolic rate which increases your chances of storing more body fat. Decreased metabolic rate means your body cannot maximize burning fat for fuel so it stays right where you don't want it; hips, thighs and belly. It is a vicious cycle that builds over time. The lesson here is that posture and weight control go hand in hand.

Working hand in hand with your doctor of chiropractic is the perfect solution to help with your long term goals. Reach out and ask for their guidance and you will be surprised at how much they can benefit you outside of helping back pain.

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