

[IMAGE]

Secrets To Success

By Editorial Staff

Willie McGinest knows all about success. A high-school star in football and basketball. A linebacker for, and graduate of, the University of Southern California. The number-four pick in the 1994 National Football League draft, selected by the New England Patriots. A two-time Pro Bowl selection. And a Super Bowl champion not once, not twice, but *three* times.

Now with the Cleveland Browns, Willie just announced that 2008 will be his final season in the NFL. So far, he's played nearly 200 games spanning 14 seasons; far longer than the average professional football player, who averages 3.5 years and less than 60 games in the league. What accounts for his longevity and success? A healthy attitude and healthy habits, including regular chiropractic care, among other things. But don't take our word for it; hear what Willie has to say in this exclusive interview.

This will be your 15th season in the NFL. How have you done it?

It's hard work, determination, sacrifice and commitment. A big part of that is taking care of your body. I wish I would have known a lot of things at a younger age, like just taking care of your body - getting chiropractic and massages, the cold tubs, the hot tubs. Doing a lot more of the preventative stuff before something happens. Our coach, Romeo Crennel [head coach for the Browns and former defensive coordinator for the Patriots] told us an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of rehab. I understand how my body functions, what works for my body and what keeps it going.

You mentioned chiropractic - what was your first experience with chiropractic care?

William McGinest - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark When I was with the New England Patriots, we had a team chiropractor, Dr. [Michael] Miller, who had been with the team some 25 years. I tried it when I found myself having small pulls and found out I was off-center. My back wasn't lined up. That's really important in playing a contact sport like we do. Our bodies are already machines, going 100 miles an hour, running into people, but it helps if you are aligned. If you aren't lined up or one side is off, it can cause the muscles and other parts of the body to work harder, and that causes those muscles to give out on you.

Do the Browns have a team chiropractor?

Yes, we have one [Dr. Greg Kempf, who's been with the team since 1999]. When I was on the East Coast, I used Dr. Miller. They are probably the two best I have ever had. They know my body; they know what's out. I know my body; I know when something's not lined up right. They usually go right to the problem and solve it.

Is it your experience that most NFL players use chiropractic care to some degree?

I think a lot of teams are starting to use it more and doing the research. It was a big thing a while ago that chiropractors were supposedly manipulating the muscles of the back but it wasn't doing anything. I found that not to be true. I think a lot of my success and a lot of my being healthy was heavily dependent upon chiropractic work.

How does chiropractic help prepare you for an NFL game?

Earlier in the week [in between games], I get adjusted. There are a lot of times where you go for full contact and are hitting. Your body gets jarred sometimes, is in the wrong position or you hit awkwardly. So after the game, I try to go to the chiropractor right away, just to make sure I am lined up so that my body is not in a bad position. If you are working out or practicing, and your body is not aligned, it can cause injuries. Usually, right before the game and right after the game, I make sure I'm lined up. [During the game], I'm full speed ahead, and I'm not worrying about something being off-center or unbalanced on one side, pulling a muscle or knocking something out, making it worse.

Has chiropractic ever helped you recover from an injury?

There have been times when I've knocked something out [of alignment]. I leave the field right away, we go adjust it and it fades. I've had injuries where my hamstrings tightened up because my lower back was off. I knew what was causing it. I would go get adjusted right then and come back out feeling fine.

William McGinest - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **As a linebacker, its all about speed and power. How does chiropractic help you in that regard?**

It keeps you able to use your speed and power. If you are out of balance, you feel stuff pulling, and your hamstrings and back are tight. You aren't able to move as fast. When the body is lined up and everything is

moving right, it allows you to be fluid, agile, feel good and take those hits over and over. Our bodies are used to the contact, but sometimes we get caught awkwardly. If your body is able to bounce back or be put back in alignment, it helps a great deal.

What other things do you do to stay healthy?

William McGinest - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark I train hard. I take supplements. I do a lot of stretching. I try to do exercises that complement my body type [Willie is 6' 5," 270 lbs] and I do custom workouts. I soak in the hot tub.

I work with a masseuse, of course. He's a deep-tissue specialist who keeps my lymphatic system right. He takes care of my body from head to toe. He's another reason I've been able to play at the level I've been playing all these years. I can't call him just a masseuse or a deep-tissue guy. I call him a muscle tissue specialist because he understands the body. He can see what's causing what in the body and is able to do things to open your body up and get that lymphatic system working right. He's probably the biggest key, along with the chiropractor, to my success.

You mentioned an ounce of prevention. Any advice for a young athlete just entering the NFL?

You feel good now, and everything is great because you're young. But after a while, it will start to catch up with you. You might not think you need it, but try it sometime. If you go to a really good chiropractor and can find a guy to keep you lined up, you'll feel a whole lot better when you are playing.

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