[IMAGE]

Putting Health Into Motion

By Kevin M. Wong, DC

I want you to take a few seconds and do your best to visualize a human skeleton standing in front of you. Picture the head, ribs, shoulders and arms. Now move down to the pelvis, hips and all the way down to the feet. Did you know that every bone we have in our body forms a joint with another bone? For example, move your shoulders around for a few seconds. Your large arm bone (the humerus) has a joint with the shoulder blade (the scapula) to allow you to have movement.

Every single bone forms some type of joint with another bone because joints allow us to have motion. When motion is normal at a joint, life is good. But daily activities or injuries can cause improper position of the bones, resulting in abnormal movement at the joint. When you do not have normal motion, it can lead to problems like swelling, pain, muscle spasms and arthritis later in life. Since this can happen in any joint of the body, it is important for you to pay attention to any discomfort you are feeling.

The point is, from head to toe, your joints occasionally need a tune-up. Let’s take a look at some of the more common trouble spots and what a chiropractor will do to get the healing process started.

From Shoulders to Hands

- Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Shoulders are the most mobile and least stable joints we have in our body. You probably know a lot of people who have shoulder injuries. Well, our shoulder is made up of more joints than just the ball-and-socket joint. Once we check these shoulder joints for you, it is amazing how many of them are not in proper alignment. Anyone with shoulder pain likely has one or more of these joints that need to be realigned. Improperly aligned shoulder joints can lead to muscle spasms, rotator cuff problems, tendonitis or lack of ability to move the shoulder (frozen shoulder).

Moving down the arm, we can find elbow tendonitis (golfer’s elbow, tennis elbow), carpal tunnel syndrome and other repetitive-use injuries that can cause considerable pain, swelling and muscle spasms. In general, pain in any of these joints can be treated quite effectively with chiropractic care.

The Hips and Knees

- Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Hip joint arthritis is very common these days, and you probably know someone who has had their hip replaced. When a hip is not in good alignment, the same pattern we have talked about exists. It can lead to lack of normal movement, arthritis and pain.

Osgood Schlatter disease is usually found in children's knees from a lot of sports. Ligament injuries in the knee (like the anterior cruciate ligament, medial or lateral collateral ligament) and knee cap (patella) pain often arise due to the leg bones being malpositioned.

The Upper, Middle and Lower Back

- Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark How many of you sit at a desk or drive your car during your daily activities? Do you know that most of us sit hunched forward a little bit? Even people who start out with straight posture tend to start slouching a little bit as they sit longer. Couple this with using your arms to type, talk on the phone, write or any other activity like this and you have a recipe for a tight upper back. Just about everyone has a tight upper back and shoulder area. Our spine in the upper and mid back gets misaligned due to the forward posture and the muscle tightness.

How about scoliosis? Scoliosis is when there is a sideways curvature of part or parts of the spine. Depending on how bad the curvature is, it could involve the low back (lumbar area) and the mid-back (thoracic area). Of course there are some types of scoliosis that are so serious that medical intervention may be necessary. For the most part, chiropractors do a wonderful job helping scoliosis patients. Those vertebrae are really stuck and not moving as well as they could be with some help from our hands. We don't claim to be able to reverse a scoliosis, but at least help to keep it from getting worse.

Sciatica, lower back spasms and disc injuries are other common maladies. These can lead to a lot of debilitating pain for patients. Again, the root of these problems can lie with the bones of the pelvis and the low back. Once we analyze those regions and make some corrections in the bone positions, the muscles can start relaxing, and pain and swelling can be reduced.

The Feet and Ankles

Did you know we actually have three arches of the feet that are supported mostly by a large ligament and secondarily by the bones and muscles? When we have a collapse of these arches, which happens in eight out

of 10 people in the world, we can have a variety of painful conditions. Plantar fascitis and Morton's neuromas cause pain on the bottom of the feet. Heel spurs, ankle sprains and Achilles tendonitis will affect the heel area. Shin splints affect the outer part of your lower leg.

The Head and Neck

- Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Chiropractic is an effective option for headaches. Although the cause of many headaches remains somewhat of a mystery, one thing that is understood is that blood circulation and impulses from the nerves to the brain have a role to play. When patients have headaches, they almost always have a lack of normal movement of their skull and the first two cervical vertebrae (bones). By restoring alignment to these bones, muscle tension is released. This allows blood circulation and nerve information to flow better.

Some of the other conditions chiropractors see every day are neck muscle spasms, torticollis (also known as wry neck, a condition in which the head is tilted to one side, while the chin is elevated and turned to the opposite side), dizziness and ear infections. Many of us are also trained on how to work on the jaw joints (known as the temporomandibular joints), and gentle realignment of these joints is helpful with headaches and neck pain.-

image - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark What is so interesting about all of the above conditions is that they all have some relation to the bones of the body. At some point in your life, you may suffer a direct injury to a body part that causes pain. Or you may have pain develop out of the blue or get worse over time, but the cause is a mystery. Tell all of this to your chiropractor because it is our job to make sure we find out what is going on and help you with it.

The moral of this story is this: No injury or pain is ever just muscular. You know now that muscles attach to bones and bones make up joints everywhere in the body. It may be the muscles giving you pain, but unless you have the joints examined, you could be setting yourself up to have a relapse or a flare up down the road. If you have any more questions about any of these areas of the body I have mentioned, the person to ask is probably calling you into the treatment room now for your appointment.

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