

Journey Into
Better Health

#1 Your
chiropractic
health care program

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JOURNEY INTO BETTER HEALTH



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— PART ONE —

Like most patients, you've probably begun your journey into better health with a real health problem: You hurt . . . something's wrong . . . you're not feeling well.

You might not have realized it before, but many human ailments actually start out as problems in the spine. Perhaps yours is one of these.

*In this opening chapter of your **Journey Into Better Health**, we'll learn more about the unique human spine and how it affects other parts of the body; and then about how the Doctor of Chiropractic (a very special kind of doctor) detects problems in the spine and corrects them.*

A. THE SPINE

It's hard to believe that so many human ailments can start because of problems in the spine. These are some of them:

- headaches
- neck and arm pain
- back pain
- leg pain
- sciatica
- lordosis
- some digestive problems
- muscle cramping
- shoulder and joint pain
- some hearing problems
- some "nerve" problems
- tingling or numbness
- some speech problems
- shingles
- poor bladder or bowel control
- constipation
- proneness to colds
- limping
- some "allergies"

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To understand how so *many* different kinds of health problems can be connected to the spine, we must recall two very important facts:

FACT #1: The spine is the central “anchor” for the body’s whole frame. It’s what holds us upright and allows us to walk on two feet (without having to rest “on all fours”). Man is the only creature on earth that can walk this

way, for he’s the only creature with the “back for it.”

FACT #2: The spine is the body’s main “telephone cable.” Nerves from every limb and organ and other part of the body are “wired” to the brain through one main “trunk line” — the spinal cord — which runs through the center of the spine.

THE BODY’S “TOWER OF POSTURE”

You might think of a tall thin tower, like the antenna of a radio station, and then of one of those old hitching posts used in the early west. A hitch-

ing post is parallel to the ground and is fixed at both ends; an antenna tower rises straight up from the ground and is fixed at only one end.

SIDE JOURNEY #1

A great many health problems are *not* connected to the spine. For example, some heart problems; diseases like cancer, polio and smallpox; some allergies; and diseases like pneumonia, whooping cough and “strep” throat — none of these are within the Chiropractor’s usual scope of practice.

The Doctor of Chiropractic *will* tell you how to “keep your defenses up” against some of these diseases — by eating properly and keeping fit — but he won’t treat you for them.

What he *will* treat you for are the hundreds of conditions, as different as they may seem at first, that begin with problems in the spine. And he will concentrate more on “keeping your body well” than merely on “making your body well” after some disease or ailment.

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If you had to guess, which of these two “structures” would be harder to hold straight? Which would tend to twist and bend more easily? Which do you suppose would require more “tension” on it just to keep it upright and prevent it from falling over?

The human spine is like the antenna tower, and it requires constant tension in all its muscles to keep our bodies upright. That is why man was almost “born to have back problems.” Human beings suffer more back problems — and more kinds of back problems — than any other creature on the earth. Gravity is Man’s

enemy, because the pull of gravity is hardest on Man’s unique spine.

Look at Figure 1 on the next page. The small cylinders or blocks represent the bones of the spine.* The thin shaded “wafers” between the bones are the discs. These flexible “cushions” act like “shock absorbers” to protect the spine from the constant stress and strain it’s under every day.

If you think of this “stack” as a tower (like the radio station antenna tower), then the “guy wires” in the drawing stand for the muscles of the back, which keep the spine erect and allow us to stand upright.

*The bones of the spine are called *vertebrae* (ver'-te-bray); one is called a *vertebra* (ver'-te-rah).

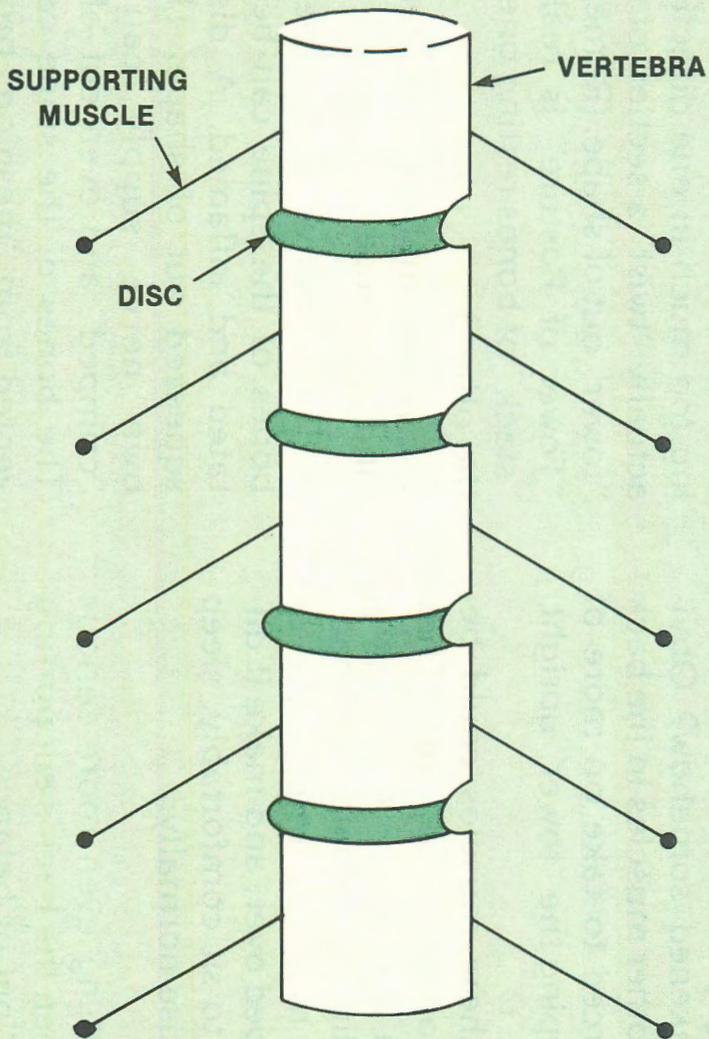


Figure 1
A diagram of the human spine showing the bones, the discs and the muscles.

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What would happen if one of these supporting “guy wires” became damaged or weakened somehow? Obviously, some other muscles in the back would be forced to take on more of the work keeping the “tower” upright.

In time, these muscles could become overworked, tired, sore. They could begin to ache, cramp and strain. In addition, “imbalanced” back muscles can make us limp, cause us to walk stooped over, and make it difficult for us to sit comfortably, sleep well or exercise normally.

Yet something even more serious can occur when the back’s supporting muscles get “out of balance.”

If an “overworked” back muscle gets too tired out, or if it begins pulling *too* much in one direction, it can actually “twist” a section of the spinal “tower” out of shape. (Remember: our “Tower of Posture” is really only a “stack” of bones resting one on top of the other.)

Even a small twist or bend of this kind can cause trouble:

The sensitive tissues between the bones of the spine can become irritated and inflamed. A disc can be squeezed out of shape. The spine’s own nerve supply can become “crimped” and even cut off entirely. The bones of the spine can be prevented from “meshing” properly.

And when the spine becomes “twisted” in this way, it will often call on its own muscles (its “guy wires”) to work even harder to ‘protect’ it from the pain and discomfort it senses. This can cause more muscle tiredness, more aching and cramping and, in time, more “twisting” or bending in the spine.

If this sounds like a “vicious circle,” it is. That is why it’s so important to keep the “Tower of Posture” aligned properly and its muscles in good balance.

More than just “back problems” can occur when the spine gets “twisted” or bent.

But it’s very important to realize that Man’s “Tower of Posture” can be twisted out of shape accidentally. Even when the spine’s supporting muscles *are* healthy and well balanced, the spine can become misaligned simply through the activities of daily life.

A fall or slip on the ice can do it. Getting “hit” in a contact sport can do it. Sudden exercise or straining can do it. Sleeping “wrong” can do it. When a person says he “got a whiplash” in a car accident, what has usually happened is that his spine has been twisted (“whiplashed”) out of proper alignment.

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Or, a disc can become weakened or damaged or start to wear “thin” from aging. But whatever the cause — an underlying weakness, an accident or injury, or a disease within the spine — when our “Tower of Posture” gets twisted out of shape, we can’t walk properly or move freely and painlessly through our daily activities.

We’re hampered. We feel limited, out of sorts, not chipper or spry. A “bad back” can affect everything we

do, our whole outlook on life, our whole sense of well being.

Even more important, a “bad back” can affect parts of our body far removed from the spine. For we cannot forget **“FACT # 2”** about the spine:

The spine is not only the central anchor of the body’s frame, it’s *also* the main “communications junction” for all the parts of the body to the brain, the body’s “central computer.”



The Body's "Main Trunk Line"

Look at Figure 2 on the next page. This is our "Tower of Posture" again, except that the "guy wires" — the back's supporting muscles — aren't drawn in.

Instead, the "wires" you see represent the main nerve "cables" of the body, which branch out into smaller nerves, and then into still smaller nerves, until they reach out into every area of the body — from the fingertips to the toes, to the organs and the skin, to every muscle, every joint, every bone in the body.

As you can see from the diagram, all the body's main nerves begin in-

side the spine. They are in fact branches of the spinal cord, the body's largest and most important "nerve."

You can also see that these spinal cord branches come out of the spine through small "windows" between the joints of the spine's bones.

The shape of these "windows" is very important. They have just enough room for the nerves to pass through (along with some blood vessels and other tissues) without "touching." So if the shape of these openings is changed, even a little, the nerves passing through can become irritated, "crimped."

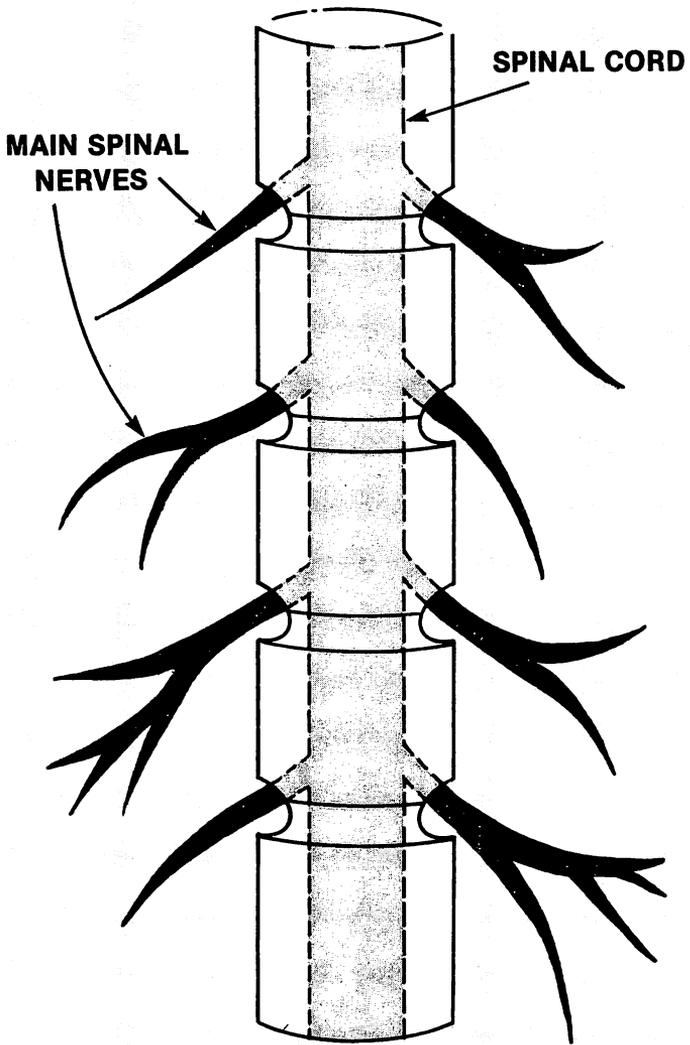


Figure 2
A diagram of the human spine
showing the main spinal nerves.

As you've probably guessed, the shape of the spinal "windows" *can* be changed, and often are, when the bones of the spine become misaligned or "twisted."

Figure 3 shows what a spinal nerve "window" looks like in a healthy, well-aligned spine. In Figure 4 we see what happens when the bones forming the opening become improperly aligned. Notice that the distorted "window" puts pressure on the nerve passing through it.

Nerves are very sensitive. Very small changes in pressure on a nerve can have a serious effect on all the parts of the body to which the nerve branches out.

The strength of the "signals" passing along the nerve can be weakened or interrupted. Messages can get "scrambled," sent in the wrong direction, or shunted to the wrong part of the body. "False" signals can be sent out.

As a result of any of these things, a whole variety of health problems can occur in the body — problems we don't usually think of as having *anything* at all to do with the "back."

A person's digestion can be affected. Headaches, muscle aches and joint pains in distant parts of the body can occur. A person's breathing can be affected.

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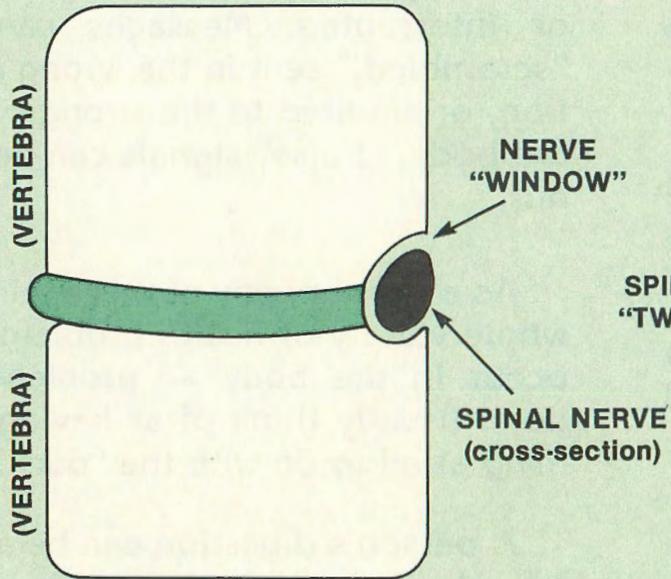


Figure 3

Diagram of a normal nerve "window" in a healthy spine.

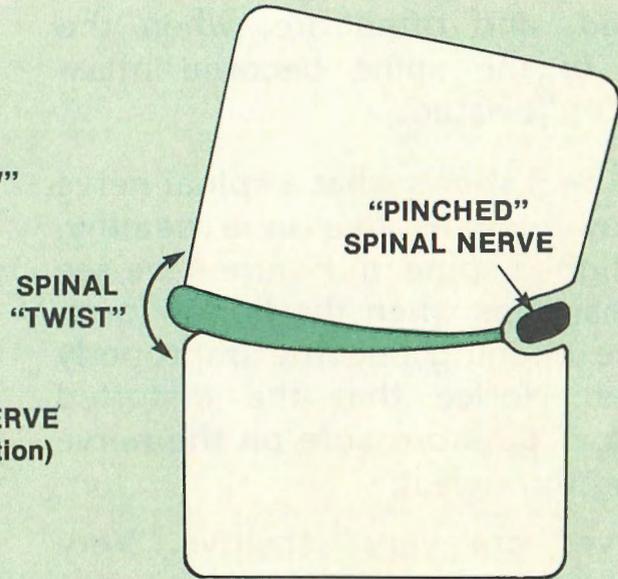


Figure 4

What happens when a nerve "window" gets distorted through spinal "twisting."

The blood supply to various organs can be affected, causing them to work poorly or become more prone to disease

A person's hearing can suffer. A "crimped" spinal nerve can also cause shooting pains in the arms and legs. It can affect a person's bladder and bowel control, the way all his muscles work.

It's normal for someone to find it hard to believe at first that pains in the arms and legs, hearing problems, digestive problems, proneness to disease, and a whole host of other ailments can all be cleared up simply by

putting a person's spine "back together again." Yet, when we realize that *all* the body's main nerves pass *through* the spine, it can no longer be any mystery why the "health of the spine" is so terribly important to us.

The ancient Greeks knew a "twisted back" somehow could cause serious health problems; but they didn't know why. After Man discovered the nervous system and the spine, the spine's "nerve windows" and how they can become "distorted," it was easy to understand why "proper care of the human frame" (one definition of the word "Chiropractic") can be so important.

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SIDE JOURNEY #2

“Back doctors” — Doctors of Chiropractic — treat a lot more than just “bad backs.” Yet back problems *can* be among our most painful and aggravating ailments. When our backs and limbs and bodies aren’t “aligned” right, it can affect every aspect of our lives . . . how we feel, how we walk and move, how we sleep . . . our whole disposition.

Sometimes, a “bad spine” means even more serious problems.

When the body’s nerve supply is interfered with — as it can be when the spine is “twisted” out of shape — every part of the body can be affected. Hearing loss to tingling toes; shooting pains to total numbness; cramping legs to “hard” swallowing: These and many other problems can be touched off when the body’s “Tower of Posture” isn’t in good working order. Only when we understand the two-part role the spine plays in the body can we understand why Chiropractic health care can be so vitally important to our total good health.

PUTTING THE SPINE “BACK TOGETHER AGAIN”

Chiropractors are doctors who put backs “back together again.” Through research and study, they have mastered scientifically the “secret” of the ancient doctors of Greece: the knowledge of putting just the right amount of pressure on just the right places on the spine to “re-adjust” it, relieve its tension, and allow it to function properly.

Why don't other doctors use this same knowledge to help patients and prevent human ailments?

First, of course, is that there are some human ailments that *aren't* re-

lated to the spine. These are conditions that can only be treated with drugs or surgery. Many doctors choose these kinds of ailments to treat, for they prefer the relatively “short-term” approach of using drugs and surgery to relieve suffering.

Chiropractic is a “long-term” method, however, and this is another reason why more doctors don't use the useful techniques of Chiropractic.

With some health problems, the symptoms *must* be treated first. But with the host of human problems that begin in the spine, Chiropractic treatment never stops, until the real prob-

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lem (the root cause) is corrected. Sometimes this means correcting life-long habits, *and this takes time* — time that not all patients and not all doctors are always willing to give.

There is another reason that the principles of Chiropractic aren't more widely used. That is that not all doctors believe that a "twisted" spine can really cause so many different health problems.

This doesn't mean they're right, only that responsible opinions differ — as they did about smoking at one time.

For years people believed (and most doctors along with them) that

there wasn't anything wrong with cigarettes. Today, everybody knows the truth about smoking.

Years ago, too, only a handful of M.D.s realized that exercise right after heart surgery could be *good* for patients. Today, this is a common practice.

In a similar way, the importance of a healthy spine is a relatively "new" idea. And although hundreds of thousands of patients have been helped through having their spines "put back together again," Chiropractic health care is still not as widely accepted in this country as it is has been for years in European countries.

SIDE JOURNEY #3

As healing sciences go, Chiropractic isn't very old. It got its start only around the turn of this century. The ancient Greeks knew about the importance of the spine and used "the adjustment of the spine" to cure human illnesses. But it wasn't until around 1895 that Dr. D. D. Palmer made a careful study of the spine, and especially of the ways it could get "twisted" out of shape.

Dr. Palmer found that his patients seemed to get better from a lot of ailments when he was able to put the bones of the patients' spines back into good alignment. Dr. Palmer believed that the bones of the spine were probably "crimping" the nerves passing through the spinal column, and that *this* was probably what was causing the patients' problems.

Dr. Palmer wrote out a scientific description of his discovery and presented a precise method for "adjusting" the spine's individual bones and thereby putting the spinal column "back together again." Soon, other doctors read of his methods and began using the principles of what Dr. Palmer called "the Chiropractic method."

B. THE DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC

There are many different kinds of doctors. The main differences between them have to do with the kinds of diseases they treat and how they treat them.

While each of these doctors uses a different kind of healing, they all have certain things in common.

For example, all doctors in the United States must be licensed to practice their chosen form of healing. Each state licenses its own doctors. Doctors of Chiropractic, like Medical Doctors, Doctors of Osteopathy, Dentists and others, are licensed to practice in every State of the U.S.

Also, all professional colleges of the healing arts in the U.S. (including Medical and Osteopathic Schools, Dental Schools and Chiropractic Colleges) accept only students who have college or university training.

Most professional schools require at least four years of education; some Colleges of Chiropractic, as well as some Medical Schools, require five years.

WHAT THE CHIROPRACTOR LEARNS IN SCHOOL

Chiropractic healing is based, as we have learned, on the fact that problems in the spine can cause a lot of different human health problems (not merely “back problems” alone).

The Chiropractic profession, like the Medical and Dental professions, also requires doctors to continue their education after graduation, so that they will keep up to date with the latest advances in their field.

What makes the different kinds of doctors *different* is, of course, the kind of healing each practices — the kind of healing each “learns in school.”

Therefore, Doctors of Chiropractic must first learn “everything there is to know” about the human body — its skeleton, muscles, organs, tissues, blood supply, nerve supply, etc.

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Like other kinds of doctors, Chiropractors also must learn about human nutrition, about which foods help the body stay well and which can weaken the body and make it more prone to disease.

Then, after he has mastered these basics, the student Chiropractor begins an in-depth study of the human spine.

He studies the bones of the spine and the discs; the spinal cord and the main spinal nerve “branches”; the muscles of the back and of the whole frame; how the spine develops during infancy and how it’s supposed to work in a healthy adult. All these subjects,

and more, are covered in great detail during a Chiropractor’s final years of training.

But it’s in the area of how patients are *treated* that a Chiropractor’s training differs most from that given to other doctors.

Using the methods first written out by Dr. D. D. Palmer, Chiropractors learn about the hundreds of ways in which the bones of the spine can become “misaligned,” bent or “twisted” out of shape — and also how they can be “put back” into good order again.

They learn which nerves can become affected, which muscles sup-

port the various sections of the spine. They learn how, with the proper pressure on the right parts of the spine, they can in time bring the spine back into alignment.

They also learn about the kinds of habits that can damage or irritate the spine. Habits like poor nutrition, poor posture, excessive smoking, obesity, and a host of others. These are things that can weaken the spine, allow it to get "out of balance," and finally cause other serious health problems.

This special study of the spine requires many, many months; but it is only the beginning.

For as the student Chiropractor enters his last years of training, he then begins a period of hundreds of hours actually "practicing" the skills of Chiropractic healing.

Like student-doctors the world over, Doctors of Chiropractic begin their practice using their fellow students as "make-believe" patients. Then, all student-doctors are required to work with actual patients, under the careful supervision of practicing doctors.

This is the most important, most rigorous part of a Chiropractor's training.

SIDE JOURNEY #4

In many respects, the first two years of a Chiropractor's training are identical to the first two years of training in Medical Schools. Students study such subjects as Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Toxicology, Neurology, Biology, Chemistry — all the studies having to do with how the body's put together, how it functions and develops, what happens to it when things "go wrong."

The examination that Doctors of Chiropractic must pass to graduate, and the tests given for the Chiropractic License in most states, are similar to the kinds of tests that Doctors of Medicine, Doctors of Osteopathy and other doctors must pass.

Chiropractors are covered by the same laws and by many of the same kinds of regulations as other doctors, in most states. Doctors of Chiropractic, like some Medical Doctors and Doctors of Osteopathy, can also specialize in specific treatment methods or in the treatment of certain specific kinds of diseases. But the most important difference between Chiropractors and other kinds of doctors is that Chiropractors do not use drugs or surgery in their approach to healing.

A Doctor of Chiropractic must have “good hands.” For it is through his hands that the Chiropractor learns to “feel” what condition his patient’s spine is in, and by the use of his hands that he learns to “adjust” the spine and bring it back into proper working order.

It’s long, painstaking work to master all the skills a Chiropractor needs.

It takes time to learn how to “know by touch” just what “adjustment” a patient’s spine needs during each visit to the doctor’s office and for each particular spinal problem the patient has.

Yet all Chiropractors must master these delicate skills before they can receive the Doctor of Chiropractic diploma. And without this degree, a Chiropractor cannot be licensed to practice anywhere in the U.S.

When a Doctor of Chiropractic has completed his professional training, he has become an expert on the human spine.

He is more knowledgeable about the spine and its problems than any other doctor in the world. And he is ready to help those who need the special kind of healing he has spent several years of his life learning how to give.

“HOW HE PRACTICES”

Like any doctor who is meeting you for the first time, your Chiropractor will want to learn everything he can about you.

He'll want to know what ailment has brought you to his office, but he'll also want to know all about your past health history, how you feel in general, what the overall condition of your health is at the moment.

He'll want to know something about your occupation, your work habits, your hobbies; what you do for exercise, your diet, how you sleep and your general health habits.

Then, the Chiropractor will spend a good deal of time talking to you about your own immediate health problems.

In most cases, he'll want to take X-ray pictures of your spine so that he can see if, and where, your spine might be out of alignment.

Like doctors all over the world, Chiropractors believe that “to see is to know, not to see is to guess” — and no doctor will “guess” about his patient's health. That is why X-rays are so important to the Chiropractic examination.

Then comes a series of tests, which may include blood pressure, reflexes, muscle tone, nerve function, "range of motion" and others. (Where Chiropractors may do so, the doctor might also order blood tests and urine tests as well.)

Then, the doctor will perform a complete physical examination of your frame, especially of your spine.

Through this examination, the Chiropractor will find out which joints of your spine might be out of alignment; which muscles of your back might need strengthening; which discs might need special attention.

He'll already have his suspicions, of course; but through his hands he will confirm what your "symptoms" have already "told" him.

Finally, your Chiropractor will sit down with you and talk about your own specific situation. He'll describe what he thinks is "wrong" with your spine, why he believes you're suffering the discomfort you are.

He will explain to you that there are two basic causes for the spine to get "out of alignment." The first is a sudden, accidental injury to the spine.

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Examples of this are “whiplash” accidents and the kinds of back injuries players sometimes suffer in athletics.

The second cause of spinal “misalignments” is an “underlying weakness” somewhere in or around the spine.

An example of this is obesity. One of the surest ways to a “bad back” is being overweight. The human spine is under a lot of “tension” as it is. The extra burden of extra pounds is often all it takes to make the spine “give in” and become bent, pulled or “distorted” out of its proper alignment.

Another example of an “underlying weakness” in the spine is the muscle strain that can come from poor work habits.

A typist who never changes the position of her head, can begin to develop spinal misalignments in the neck and upper back area. A housewife who stands “flat-footed” at her ironing board several hours a week, can begin to feel straining and discomfort in her lower back.

In fact, the vast majority of “back problems” Chiropractors treat have a long history. Most of them stem from one or more “underlying causes” that have been building up toward the “snapping point” for a long time.

That is why most Chiropractic patients discover that they really have *two* problems — the one that brought them to the Chiropractor's office in the first place, and an “underlying problem” that allowed the first one to develop.

If you're one of these patients, your Chiropractor will explain that, because “underlying weaknesses” in the back often take a long time to develop, they often take a long time to clear up, too.

Muscles may have to be “re-trained” and given better strength and balance.

Your weight and posture (if you're too heavy) may have to be improved.

Your overall muscle tone may have to be boosted, and your nutrition adjusted to give you the extra vitamins and minerals you might need.

All these improvements take time. Even so-called “temporary” or “sudden” injuries to the back can require many months to be properly corrected.

This is because in many cases, these “sudden” injuries are really only “triggers” that set off an underlying problem that might have been building up for many months or years.

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When the back finally *does* “give in,” it may need a long time to recover, even though the immediate injury doesn’t appear to be that “serious.”

No matter what kind of ailment might have brought you to your Chiropractor’s office, however, your doctor will probably recommend regular Chiropractic care, along with a number of specific steps to help the immediate problem.

Chiropractors so often recommend regular visits because they believe that the “proper care of the human frame” is essential to good health. They are always much more concerned with “keeping the body well”

than with merely “making the body well,” after it has suffered some specific accident or injury.

The only way to do this is for the patient to visit his Chiropractor regularly. Yet just going to the Chiropractor’s office isn’t enough.



THE CHIROPRACTOR'S "AGREEMENT" WITH HIS PATIENTS

The Doctor of Chiropractic, like all who are engaged in healing, is dedicated to the relief of human suffering and the prevention of disease.

The Chiropractor believes that a large number of human ills start in the spine, and that "proper care of the human frame" is therefore essential to good health.

Yet all Chiropractors realize that this is not a job the doctor can do alone. It's a job that needs the full-time participation of the patient. And it's a long-term job, not a short-term one; really, it's one that never ends.

For this reason, every Chiropractor strives to achieve a very special kind of "agreement" with *each* of his patients.

He tries to make each patient realize that the patient's part in the work of "caring for the human frame" is at least as important as the Chiropractor's.

Sometimes, however, patients are reluctant to hear this.

Especially for patients who've developed a lot of "bad habits," the recommendations of the Chiropractor are hard to put into action.

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Yet if the patient doesn't play his part, the Chiropractor can do very little. He may be able to provide some relief temporarily, but unless the patient is willing to eliminate the *underlying causes* of his problems, his symptoms will come back again and again, and might even get more serious each time.

That is why the "agreement" between the Chiropractor and his pa-

tients is a very special one. Your Chiropractor will tell you something like this:

"If you're willing to work with me, to do the things that only you and you *alone* can do, then there will be a very good chance the two of us together can make you better soon and then keep you well for the rest of your life. That is my promise to you. What promise will you make to yourself?"



— PART TWO —

Now that you've learned about the basics of Chiropractic health care, and the role the Doctor of Chiropractic can play in helping you get well and keep well, your journey into better health has been well begun. You're on the road. The rest is up to you.

For as you've also learned, better health isn't something you can buy or acquire overnight. It's something you have to work for, day in and day out. It's something you might have to change some habits to achieve. You may have to start doing things a little differently.

*In this final chapter of **Journey Into Better Health**, you'll learn about the five basic steps that **you** will have to take to get yourself well and keep yourself well with the help of your Chiropractor. These are your "5 Steps to Better Health."*

C. 5 STEPS TO BETTER HEALTH

There are five simple steps you can take toward your own better health. They are “simple,” but they’re not “easy.”

Exercising is hard work and not very much fun.

Dieting is no fun at all.

Smoking is one of the hardest habits of all to give up.

And remembering to take the proper vitamins and dietary supplements when needed can be a tedious chore.

But if you’re serious about your health, if you *really* want to get well and stay well, then these are the five “simple” steps you will have to take.

STEP #1: REGULAR CHIROPRACTIC VISITS

Your Chiropractor will probably recommend that you try to visit his office on a regular basis.

If you've had an injury or problem that has caused a serious "misalignment" in your spine, your doctor may want to see you several times a week at first, until he can get the immediate problem under control. You may then be able to drop back to visits once a week, then twice or three times a month, and then finally perhaps once a month.

You will probably find that Chiropractic health care is the best health

care "bargain" in town. And most health insurance plans cover all or some of your Chiropractic care.

Regular Chiropractic care is especially important for those patients who have an "underlying problem" in the spine. Most back problems take a long time to build up, and therefore they often take a long time to reverse.

Even when you're "feeling good" — and most patients *do* feel better even after one visit to the Chiropractor — you should continue with regular care. Temporary relief of symptoms isn't the same as taking care of the basic, underlying problem.

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Once you've recovered from your immediate problem and have no continuing pain or discomfort, you'll find that regular visits to your Chiropractor will continue to do you a "world" of good.

Remember: Problems in the spine build up over time. They accumulate with each passing day, each passing week. Tensions of everyday life accumulate in the spine and in time can lead to problems.

By visiting your Chiropractor regularly, these tensions can be relieved. Each time you leave your doctor's office, you'll be starting out with a "clean slate," your spine in good

working order, your frame in proper "balance."

It's not always easy in a busy life to find time to visit your Chiropractor once or twice a month.

But those who have made regular Chiropractic care a habit find they have fewer problems, and less severe problems, than patients who go to their doctors only when they get into "serious" trouble or suffer a particular accident or injury.



STEP #2: STOP SMOKING

There's probably no habit harder to break than smoking. But you should try.

Everyone knows about the dangers of smoking and lung cancer, emphysema and other diseases. But doctors also believe that the chemicals in tobacco smoke can cause severe kinds

of muscle problems as well as certain "nerve" problems.

So if you're a smoker, quit — or at least try to cut down as much as you can on the amount you smoke (or chew). The simple fact is: tobacco is poison.

STEP #3: BE CAREFUL ABOUT YOUR DIET AND NUTRITION

Everyone knows you have to eat right to stay well. This is another "simple" fact which many of us forget.

If you're overweight, your Chiropractor will recommend that you diet. He will tell you that carrying extra

pounds is the surest way to a bad back. Just think of those extra deposits of fat as "lead" weights hanging upon your frame, and think of the extra burden these weights place on your spine's muscles.

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Certain health problems are caused by not getting enough of certain vitamins and minerals. Your Chiropractor may suggest certain foods or certain supplements to your diet to take care of these problems.

Most dietary and nutritional problems can be handled just by changing the things you eat; but sometimes, your body needs a little extra help until it can get back on the right "track" again.

In addition to the specific recommendations your Chiropractor makes, you can never go wrong simply by making sure you eat a well-balanced, nutritional diet.

Also, you should also make sure to drink plenty of liquids each day (water is better than either tea or coffee). You should drink several 8-ounce glasses of water daily — even if you're not sick!

Fluids are important not just to help fight disease, but also to keep the body in good general tone and fitness. Fluids help your body rid itself of the waste materials it builds up during the normal course of living. The body is constantly "cleansing" itself, but you must help by providing enough fluids for the body to do its job effectively.

You should also make sure to get plenty of “bulk” in your diet (fiber, grains, fruits and vegetables, etc.). Bulk helps your body “process” the food you eat more efficiently and makes sure that “poisons” don’t build up in your system. Bulk helps you maintain regular bowel movements and a “clean” digestive tract.

STEP #4: WATCH YOUR EXERCISE AND SLEEP

Many back problems arise because the muscles of the back, or other muscles in the body, get tired, weak, out of tone.

Sometimes, the answer is exercise. Your Chiropractor might recommend to you a series of exercises specifi-

Try to become aware of what you eat, how you eat, when you eat. Things that taste good are sometimes not very “good” for you. Learn to recognize what your body needs and what it doesn’t.

Your Chiropractor will help you find the best diet for you. But *you’re* the one who’ll have to stick to it.

cally aimed at helping strengthen muscles found to be weak. Or, he might recommend a general program of exercise — like walking, jogging, swimming, light calisthenics — just to keep your body fit and trim, well-toned and healthy.

Unless there are special reasons *not* to do so, regular daily exercise is good for almost everyone. It's especially important for those whose jobs keep them at a desk or standing in one place for long periods during the day.

Your Chiropractor will be able to recommend the best kinds of exercise for you. He'll tell you what to do, when to do it, how to do it — and what kinds of exercises you should *avoid* doing.

But again, only *you* can do the exercises your body needs. It's not fun and it's not easy. Yet if you stick with the exercises your Chiropractor gives you, you'll find yourself feeling better

and better every day. And you may even surprise yourself and find that a day without exercise is a day that's not complete for you.

That's how *good* regular exercise can make you feel!

The opposite of exercise is sleep. While each person requires different amounts of sleep, and while our need for sleep changes as we grow older, most of us need a good, solid 7 to 8 hours of sleep, most of the time.

It's usually a good idea to sleep in a somewhat cooler, rather than a warm, room. It's also good to let in at least a little fresh air, even in the winter

months (just crack the bedroom window a notch). And for patients with specific back problems, the Chiropractor might recommend a special mattress or pillow.

(It's interesting to learn that many patients often find that, after they've

started regular exercising and watching their diets, sleeping soundly and comfortably comes much more easily. And good rest is one of the body's best defenses against illness and disease.)

STEP #5: TAKE CARE OF YOUR FRAME

Your Chiropractor will tell you what specific exercises, diets and improvement programs you should follow to get over the problem which brought you to his office.

But he'll also encourage you to learn and practice a few simple "rules and regulations" having to do with the

proper care of your frame, on a regular, daily basis.

Whether you're "healthy as a horse" or just recovering from an injury or other problem with your back, these are some of the "do's and don'ts" that everyone should be aware of:

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- * Never bend from the waist; bend only from the hips and knees.
- * When standing for long periods, use a footrest to prop one foot up, then the other, alternating frequently
- * Never lift a heavy object up higher than your waist.
- * Always turn and *face* (don't twist around to face) any object you wish to lift.
- * Don't carry unbalanced loads; always hold heavy objects close to your body.
- * Never carry *anything* you can't manage with ease; don't be a "hero."
- * Avoid sudden movements, sudden "overloading" of muscles in any part of your body, but particularly in your back.
- * Avoid sitting in soft chairs or deep cushions, especially if you have a history of back trouble.
- * Unless specifically instructed by your doctor, don't use heating pads or heat packs on sore back muscles; heat can actually inflame the nerves of the back and cause greater discomfort.

- * Avoid a lot of “overhead” work, excessive stooping and bending, work that requires a lot of twisting or straining.
- * Take it easy. Try to take a “rest period” or break several times a day. Make it a point to relax and “do nothing” for short periods every few hours or so.
- * Try to follow the special advice and recommendations your Chiropractor gives you. He has only your better health in mind and wants nothing more than to see you get better and stay well. But in the end, only *you* can do it. It is your “journey,” your job.



SIDE JOURNEY #5

As you can see, your journey into better health never really ends. As you continue to grow older, things change. Your body has different needs; the aging process makes it more prone to certain kinds of illnesses; new situations in your life put different demands on your system.

You shouldn't fight these changes, but learn to grow and change with them. Along the way, your Chiropractor will be your helper and your guide. If you're ready to do *your* part, to do the things that only *you* can do to control the destiny of your health, then your journey into better health will last your whole life through.

The Beginning . . .