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Spinal Health 101

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Ever think what life would be like without a spine? If your spine wasn't there to hold you up every day, how could you walk or run or even breathe? Without the spine, your spinal cord would be unprotected from damage. Your brain and spinal cord are the only organs in your body that are completely encased in bone. Why? Because you can't live without them!

The goals of proper spinal health are to improve posture, to enhance spinal and neurological health, and to prevent misalignment (subluxation). Keeping your spine and nerve system in peak condition by striving toward these goals will enhance your ability to have an active, healthy life. Here are a few easy-to-follow solutions that will help you and your spine.

Sitting Pretty

While sitting may seem effortless, your body is exerting great effort to keep your upper body in place. The muscles especially in your lower back can be needlessly strained when improper posture causes as little as a 30 percent curvature in your spine. Keeping your spine straight and aligned while sitting at work, or in the car can greatly reduce tension on your lower back.

Love your Lumbar Spine

The lumbar spine, found in your lower back, consists of the five largest vertebrae and gets the most pressure from activities such as walking and running, even sitting. The spine naturally curves in at the lumbar level before it meets the tailbone. A small pillow or rolled up towel helps the lumbar spine experience less fatigue.

Pillow Talk

Spinal posture can be supported at night with good pillows that raise parts of the body to join the rest of the spine. If you sleep on your back, a pillow under your neck, head, and knees will insure a restful night's sleep. Head and neck support from a pillow when on your side is also helpful. Sleeping on your stomach can damage your cervical spine (neck region), distort your alignment and cause nerve pressure. Your chiropractor can recommend the right pillow for your sleeping style.

H2O + O2

Simple health choices like regular hydration and proper breathing strengthen your body and help your spine help you. Our bodies are composed of more than 70 percent water. Depriving your body of this liquid prevents the spine from performing at its best. The same muscles we use to breathe are responsible for our posture. Breathing exercises can be learned while practicing yoga, martial arts, Pilates and even singing! Proper breathing helps to balance the body and relieves tension in the chest and shoulders. This allows the abdominal muscles to function as designed and provides maximized support for the spine.

Your chiropractor can ensure that your spine stays in the best condition it can be. Regular wellness check ups with your chiropractor will help eliminate daily stressors on your spine, improve posture and keep your spine and nerve system as healthy as possible. Seeing your chiropractor on a regular basis is part of maintaining a healthy spine.