

Sports Injuries and Chiropractic Care



Chiropractors specialize in the non-drug treatment of musculoskeletal problems, including joint sprains and disk injuries. To some extent, the chiropractic approach to sports injuries overlaps that of traditional medical care: A chiropractor's initial patient examination includes standard orthopedic and neurological tests to diagnose whether a particular pain is due to a strain, sprain or disk problem. When needed, chiropractors use x-ray to screen for fractures and other bone disorders, such as osteoporosis. Chiropractic treatment of sports injuries often includes widely used physical therapies such as ice for swelling and inflammation; and heat, ultrasound or electronic muscle stimulation for muscle strains and spasms.

Two contributions chiropractic has made to sports medicine include hands-on adjustment of spinal and other joints (to maintain a full range of motion) and a strong emphasis on the overall structural balance of the body. For example, when a muscle or joint is injured, the body naturally compensates, attempting to maintain balance and protect itself by tightening other muscles and joints. Chiropractic adjustments help restore the natural balance that was present before the injury.

Within the past decade a number of studies published in the British Medical Journal have demonstrated the effectiveness of manual manipulation (the majority of which is done by chiropractors) for back, neck and shoulder pain. Interestingly, the treatment for shoulder pain involved not only manipulation of the shoulder itself, but also of nearby areas in the neck and upper back.

Research such as this has contributed to a climate where chiropractic now enjoys far-greater acceptance than in the past. In fact, chiropractic is now part of the sports-medicine program of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Of course, you don't have to be an Olympian to benefit from chiropractic care. Each year, 20 million Americans go to the chiropractor, 90 percent of them seeking treatment for musculoskeletal problems like back pain, neck pain, other joint and muscle pains and headaches.

Common Sports Injuries

Here are some common sports injuries we see in our office:

- Biceps Tendinitis
- Hip Flexor Strain
- Impingement Syndrome
- Inversion ankle sprain
- ITB Syndrome
- Lateral Epicondylitis
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Patellofemoral pain syndrome
- Tibial Stress Syndrome

In short, while mild, temporary soreness after exertion is nothing to worry about, persistent aches and pains are a sign that you are overstressing your muscles and joints. It's important not to push your body to the limit while in pain, because this increases your risk of further injury. If your athletic activities are causing more than temporary pain, a chiropractor may be able to help.