

# CHIROPRACTIC APPROACH TO OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES



The work place is a common source of injury to the spine and extremities. Many people first encounter painful and debilitating conditions of the neck, shoulders and arms, or lower back and legs as a result of some incident that can be related to a work activity. The incident may be one single traumatic event such as a forceful or unbalanced lift, or a slip and fall type accident. This is more common among people with physical occupations that require bending, lifting and twisting, and manual moving of

heavy loads or maintaining awkward positions for prolonged periods. It may also be related to a non forceful motion or activity which is simply repeated many times a day, possibly in a position of mechanical disadvantage. This repetitious strain injury is a problem for assembly line workers, secretaries, and computer operators.

If you have been involved in an accident at work, it is very important that you report the injury to your employer as soon as possible. Your employer can then inform you of what types of health care services you can use depending on your states Worker's Compensation Insurance program. In many states, you can simply seek care from the doctor of your choice. In states that have managed care programs, you may first choose your doctor from a list of participants in the managed care program. Your employer or union representative can usually explain the rules of the system. Either way, consult with your doctor as soon as possible, because early onset of care and attention will help to control the impact of the injury and lessen lost work time.

Most common among work related conditions are those effecting the neck and lower back. The spine consists of the 24 movable vertebral bodies and the disc in between them. The spine sits on the pelvis, consisting of the sacrum, coccyx and the hips.

Vertebral bodies can be thought of as blocks of bone, whose chief function is to bear weight and provide a strong protective covering over the spinal cord. The spinal cord together with the brain forms the central part of the nervous system. The intervertebral discs can be thought of as shock absorbers, but they also function to allow the spinal segments to move. The spine is supported by various different groups of ligaments and tendons and powered by the muscles which attach to the spine in the neck, mid and lower back.

Doctors of chiropractic specialize in the evaluation and nonsurgical, drug free treatment of structural imbalances in the body, particularly the spine. They have extensive knowledge of body mechanics, motions, and forces involved with work functions. Special emphasis is placed on how these functions effect conditions of the spine and the nervous system.

## COMPLETE TREATMENT PLAN

A thorough explanation and complete treatment plan will be presented and reviewed with you before your care is begun. You will be encouraged to ask questions to ensure that you are knowledgeable about your condition, comfortable with the treatments you are to receive, and familiar with the expected outcome. Different modalities, such as heat, cold, electrical muscle stimulation, massage or traction may also be used to help control your pain and maximize the effects of the adjustment. Your doctor may conduct a review of your job site, and make recommendations about changes in body position or tool use. This is important in order to reduce the likelihood that you become re-injured once you have returned to work. You may also be asked to participate with an in office "Back School". This is designed to teach you how to properly bend, lift, twist and perform other common actions, as well as some activities specific to your form of work. This can also be conducted as a work site injury reduction program. Dietary review and therapeutic exercises may also be incorporated into your care.

**WELCOME TO CHIROPRACTIC  
HEALTH CARE**