

SPORTS INJURIES & CHIROPRACTIC



The term sports medicine encompasses the treatment of athletic-related injuries to the spine, extremities, and associated connective tissues; that is, muscles, tendons, ligaments and joint capsules. Over the last few years, Americans have done a 180 degree turnaround in the way they live. There are more of us engaging in athletic and physical activities in an effort to stay fit.

The advantages of physical activity are multiple. They are increased strength, endurance, better circulation, digestion, ability to release stress and greater resistance to disease. The disadvantages are an increased chance of injury as a consequence of improper preventative measures, such as stretching, warm-up, conditioning technique, or pushing yourself too far by overtraining.

The important thing is to detect the injured area early and determine which of the above factors is at cause. Sports chiropractors are doctors who are specialists in the conservative non drug/nonsurgical treatment of joint sprains and strains. They are also trained to recognize tendinitis, bursitis, muscle contusions or tears, and subluxation and joint dislocations as well as fractures of the joints and bones. The chiropractor can evaluate the injury, via chiropractic, orthopedic, and neurologic testing as well as x-ray, to determine a fracture site, cartilage tear, or bone pathology. After arriving at a diagnosis, he or she will coordinate proper conservative treatment and rehabilitation. If necessary, referral will be made to the proper medical specialty for casting or surgical follow-up.

In the first place, perhaps even more importantly, the doctor of chiropractic, with his or her philosophy of treating the body as a whole and understanding of biomechanics, can properly pinpoint an underlying nutritional or mechanical fault in the body that predisposes the body to injury.

Doctors of chiropractic specialize in the evaluation and nonsurgical, drug free treatment of structural imbalances in the body, with special emphasis put on the spine and its effects on the nervous system.

CHIROPRACTIC MANAGEMENT OF A SPORTS INJURY

* The Acute Stage: The First 24-48 Hours.

The initial goal in the conservative management of an athletic injury is to reduce or stop bleeding. This is accomplished by the liberal use of ice with compression and elevation.

* The Healing Stage: The First 2-3 Weeks.

Once you have gained a reduction in the bleeding and swelling, more aggressive forms of therapy can be employed. These include diathermy, a mode of deep heat to increase circulation and facilitate a quicker heal; ultrasound, also a form of deep heat as well as a deterrent to scar tissue build-up; high volt galvanic (HVG), muscle stim to increase muscle, ligament, and capsular tone around the joint, and decrease intercellular swelling and inflammation.

*The Rehabilitation Stage: The Next 2-3 Weeks.

Once the injured joint has attained its maximum range of motion, the rehabilitation phase can begin. This consists of specific stretching to decrease joint stiffness, use of limited resistance to gradually increase muscle strength, chiropractic manipulative therapy to maximize joint alignment, and to minimize adhesions.