

## **Chiropractic Care and Massage Therapy Complementary Alternatives**

Dr. Fran DeFalco

Dunsky Rehabilitation and Spine Center  
276 Turnpike Rd. Suite 218 ~ Westborough MA 01581  
508-651-8900

Kelli Wentzell, CLMT, CIMI

Chiropractic Care and Massage Therapy are both great stand-alone preventive measures. This article will explain the benefit of utilizing both therapies in conjunction with each other.

While the chiropractor is focused on the spine (*the hardware*), the massage therapist focuses on the muscles and connective tissues (*the software*). Having a massage before a spinal adjustment allows the bone to move much more easily and may provide a much greater and longer lasting effect on the body.

The goal of both therapies is to restore homeostasis and ensure the body evolves properly. Chiropractic Care works with the spine to restore proper functioning to the nervous system. Massage Therapy works with the muscles and attachments to restore range of motion and reduce any pressure being placed on the spine. The stress reduction and muscular restoration induced by general massage help the body better deal with the stresses we experience in every day life, reducing the risk of further subluxation (*a condition when one or more of the vertebrae of the spine move out of position*). There are also many types of massage that complement Chiropractic Care. For instance, once the Chiropractor relieves the subluxation, the Massage Therapist can perform neuromuscular massage to assist in restoring the neurological response, depending on the severity of damage, and perhaps trigger point therapy, which will assist in the elongation of the muscular tissue.

The nervous system is the key to your health and well-being. The brain controls everything that goes on inside the body. It makes sure your heart beats, that you don't forget to breathe, tells the body to digest food, fights off infection and regulates temperature, among thousands of other things. If there were something to get in the way of the flow of information from the brain to the body, then you would not function at your best.

The spinal cord is the main wiring system from the brain and it is protected by 24 movable bones called your spine. Branches of nerves come off the spinal cord and exit the spine to communicate with every cell, tissue and organ in your body so it can monitor the environment and respond accordingly.

When a spinal segment, a vertebra, is out of place (*subluxation*), it can cause pressure on a nerve, blocking the flow of information from the brain to the body and from the body back to the brain. These subluxations are caused by stress, whether physical, chemical or emotional. A misaligned vertebra will often cause muscle tension and spasm. This is why Massage Therapy and Chiropractic Care work so well together. Typical symptoms consist of unexplained pain, numbness, sciatica, headaches, heartburn, allergies and many other ailments. Chiropractic Care works to restore proper alignment to the spine to allow the proper flow of information so you can experience optimal health.

Many people have their teeth checked every 6 months. They do this to prevent tooth decay and periodontal disease, but many people don't think to have their spines checked. There are no dentures for the spine. If your spine degenerates or becomes arthritic, there is no correcting that. Seeing a good Chiropractor and visiting your Massage Therapist regularly can help reduce your risk of spinal arthritis and allow for a better quality of life as you age.