

Getting Old Is a Pain

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

It's a longstanding tradition in our family. Every Thanksgiving my two brothers and I challenge my nephew and two sons to a football and a basketball game in succession. The competition is always held after the main feast, but before dessert (more on that later).

The "three Js" (Josh, John, Joel) have youth and speed. When we started the event five years ago, my sons, Josh and John, were 13 and 11 years old; my nephew, Joel, was only 9.

My brothers and I (the "three Ds") are a bit older. Five years ago, I was 38, Duane was 37 and Darrell was 32. We used to have size and cunning on our side. Now we only have cunning. Fortunately, we have played together since we were kids.

The first year was fairly easy. We allowed our sons to get close in one game and won the other. But with each passing year, the competition gets tougher. We've gotten a bit slower and they've gotten quicker, but playing after the feast helps even the odds. The young lions eat prodigious amounts, only to pay for their gluttony later on the football field.

The thing I can't help notice is how sore I get the day after the competition. Of course I would never let my sons know it. I continue to move gracefully, stifling my groans in a feeble attempt to ignore the pain. I always make sure to let the youngsters leave the room before I do anything particularly difficult, like get up from the couch.

Over the last few years, I've come to learn about being a "mature" male. I've watched my friends and have designed strategies for staying in shape and feeling good. This includes the usual routine of chiropractic, vitamins and exercise. But, whether we like it or not, we're getting old and we know it.

The challenges that come with aging only increase with the years. For those that haven't enjoyed lifetime chiropractic care, the ability to go about the daily routine and enjoy life is seriously hampered.

A paper recently published by the American Geriatrics Society¹ points to the plight of the elderly:

- 18% of older Americans regularly take analgesics (at least several times a week);
- 25-50% of "community-dwelling older people" suffer from pain problems;
- 45-80% of nursing home residents have substantial undertreated pain.

With the "age wave" moving through our society, it should be obvious where chiropractic care is most needed --the older population. If this isn't obvious to you, just wait until you get older. You will develop a much greater appreciation for the chiropractic care you have enjoyed for most of your life and will have greater empathy for those who have gone for 50-60 years without chiropractic.

Today, there are over 40 million Americans over 65. That's almost 700 per licensed DC. There will be nearly 17 million Americans over 75 by next year, projections say. The trend is obvious.

My goal is to be able to keep playing football with my children and grandchildren. I depend on chiropractic to make my goal a reality. There are thousands of people in your community who have similar goals by which they measure the quality of life.

All that seniors need is a little understanding of how chiropractic can help them maintain optimal health, mobility and give them that "feel good" feeling when they get up in the morning. Isn't this what we all want?

Reference

1. The management of chronic pain in older persons. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 1998;46:635-651.
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