

Every Chiropractor Needs to Exercise to Improve Skill and Avoid Injury

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How often have you instructed patients to do exercises to help them avoid an injury? If you have a practice like mine, then it is just about every day. Do your patients do their exercises? Some do and some don't, right? Usually the patients who do their exercises feel better and have fewer symptomatic complaints. What about the doctor? Do you do exercises to feel better and avoid symptomatic complaints? If you don't, then it's time to start.

Chiropractic exercises for the doctor is an area which has been overlooked at most of our chiropractic schools, yet it can be one of the most important tools to assist doctors in the development of their skills. Exercises which are specific for the chiropractor can increase confidence and results with patients. Daily exercises can help you avoid a career ending hand, forearm or shoulder injury. Even your back is vulnerable to injury if you don't regularly exercise your erector spinae muscles.

One example of an important exercise is the wrist curl and wrist extension. The wrist curl and extension can be done using a single straight bar or small hand-held dumbbell weights. This exercise strengthens the wrist flexors and wrist extensors. These muscles are prone to strain for a new doctor learning how to adjust, and the veteran doctor who regularly treats large volumes of patients. The exercise improves virtually all adjusting skills since it focuses on the intrinsic muscles of the wrist and forearm.

This exercise strengthens the wrist flexors and wrist extensors, the muscles a DC is prone to strain.

To perform the wrist flexion exercise, sit on the edge of a bench or chair holding the weights with the palms up. The back of the forearms rest over the knees. The bar is gradually lowered, opening the fingers on the way down. A brief pause with the hand fully extended and the fingers open grasping the weight is followed by a return to the starting position. At the top portion of the range of motion, the hand is fully flexed to bring about a strong contraction of the wrist flexor muscles. Once again, a brief pause is allowed at the top of the range of motion.

The weights are held with the palms down for the wrist extension exercise.

To perform the wrist extension exercise, the doctor sits in the same position but holds the weight with the palms down toward the floor. The weight is held firmly as the wrist is gently brought forward into flexion. A brief pause at this point is followed by a full extension of the wrist and another pause.

Both of these exercises should be done with lighter weights when first starting out; more weight may be added as you go. Usually, doing three sets of 15-20 repetitions is sufficient to bring about a good strength increase over time. Commonly during the workout, you will experience a profound

pumping of blood into your forearm muscles. This is good: it means you have exercised your arms hard.

The wrist curl/wrist extension is one of many exercises which can help the student doctor or the seasoned veteran to improve skill and avoid injury.

Exercise Tubing -- An Effective Method to Improve Your Adjusting Speed

One of the most common problems chiropractors experience while learning spinal adjusting is their lack of speed. This can also befall experienced doctors learning new adjustive techniques or those who are recovering from an injury. I have found one of the most effective methods for improving a doctor's adjustive speed is by using exercise tubing.

Doctors often prescribe exercise tubing to help patient rehabilitate injured shoulders, elbows, or wrist conditions. The exercise tubing activates injured muscles by stimulating the fast³twitch muscle fibers and the intrafusal muscle spindles. The spindles are communicating proprioceptors for the muscle linking it to the central nervous system. By using exercise tubing an enhance coordination develops in the muscle being exercised.

For the same reason exercise tubing helps with the rehabilitation of muscles, it can encourage quicker, more responsive adjustments. A doctor can mimic or reproduce the exact movement of a chiropractic adjustment and repeat the movement rapidly. The exercise is performed in 10, 20, or 30-second intervals. The doctor attempts to do as many specific accurate repetitions as possible during the set. When a slight fatigue is felt during an exercise set, the doctor should not become sloppy or careless in the motions, or bad habits will be developed.

The tubing exercise is a setup for a diversified-thenar adjustment. The exercise tubing is placed in an overhead door jam. The doctor's primary adjustive hand is placed in the tubing with the hand over the top. The hand position should be exactly as one would place the hands during an actual adjustment. The tubing is taken to a slight tension and then the thrust is performed repeatedly over and over during the timed interval.

Exercise sessions should include at least 3-5 sets of timed intervals per adjustment exercise. Virtually any adjustment can be mimicked in this manner.

My contention has always been that we must treat our work as though we are professional athletes. Chiropractors have a physical job which requires them to stay in shape and continually work on improving their skills. If you incorporate this valuable exercise, I am sure you will be surprised with your improved adjustive skills.

Good luck and start exercising to stay healthy and be a better doctor. If you have any questions regarding exercises you can do to help your adjusting, you can reach me at:

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