Dynamic Chiropractic

CHIROPRACTIC TECHNIQUES

When a Shoulder Is Not a Shoulder and a Hamstring Is Not a Hamstring

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Author's note: This article is written as a testament to the power of the chiropractic adjustment and the sound, practical application of myofascial release.

My son Kyle, age 16, and I were in the basement of our home and decided to do some bench pressing on our brand-new, Olympic-size weight bench, complete with a brand new Olympic bar and weights. As Kyle was doing his first set of 10 reps, I noticed that his right arm always lagged behind his left. I found that odd, being he was right-handed. I asked him if he had injured his right shoulder; he said he hadn't.

I know that as a football player, he leads with his right shoulder a lot when tackling, so I figured he had sustained some cumulative trauma to his shoulder. I proceeded to manipulate his right shoulder and loosen up the musculature a bit. Then I had him perform his second set of bench presses. His right arm/shoulder still lagged behind the left and seemed weaker. I was a bit discouraged at this, but again adjusted his shoulder and did more muscle goading and release.

I then had him do a few more reps on the bench; same result as before. Now I really got to thinking, and I had him sit on my portable adjusting table. This time I did not touch his shoulder at all, but instead took out my trusty adjusting tool and adjusted the right side of his neck at C1-C2. I chose C1-C2 because I noted he consistently had decreased right rotation compared to left rotation.

Well, what a change that made. Not only did his neck range of motion improve in right rotation, but when he went back on the bench press, he did another set of 10 reps with ease and no right-arm lag at all! I couldn't believe how quickly he improved. A few minutes later, he went up in weight and did another set with excellent form.

I waited a few days before checking him out again. On the first set of presses, his right arm lagged a bit behind the left, but not to the same extent as before. I again followed my previous procedure of checking his cervical range of motion in rotation and noted decreased right cervical rotation. I adjusted his C2 on the right as before, and sure enough, he got stronger on the right and displayed no more right arm lagging behind the left.

I believe the strength gains continue for about a day or two from the adjustment alone. Strengthening his right rotators will have him stay stronger for a much longer period of time. I also noted that he had minor decreased right cervical lateral flexion, so sometimes I would also adjust his right C5. Put this process to the test and let me know the results. I think you will be quite amazed, as I was. Think about what this can do for your athlete patients!

Then a few weeks ago, I was filling in for the athletic trainer at Kyle's football game and about an hour before the game, a 5' 10," 205-lb. linebacker (who also punted) came up to me, saying he had pulled

his right hamstring after punting the football without stretching first. He also said he didn't think he could play because his leg hurt so much. Keep in mind that this kid is fast, strong and one of the top tacklers in the league. He's also tough (he once played a whole game after he breaking his nose in one of the first plays), so for him to say he didn't think he could play in the game was very significant.

I had him lie face down (he was in full gear) and palpated the belly of his right hamstring muscles; I felt tight and tender muscle fibers. I did some muscle goading and release, and then had him return to pregame practice. About five minutes later, he came back to me and said it basically felt about the same. I checked out his sacroiliac joints and they seemed OK. Then I had him roll over onto his back and I evaluated his iliopsoas muscles, as they would be involved in the action of punting with the hip in a flexed position.

I evaluated both sides and sure enough, the psoas muscle on the right side was very tight and tender. I proceeded to loosen up that muscle (basically using digital pressure) for about three to five minutes. Then I had him get up and see how it felt Within a minute, he said his hamstring felt really good He wound up playing three quarters of the game that day in no pain at all. The only reason he did not play the fourth quarter is because our team was ahead by a wide margin (49 to 3), so they put the sophomores in instead.

I could not believe how quickly this teenage athletes' bodies recovered when the correct treatment was applied. I tell you, it really is true: "We are fearfully and wonderfully made by our creator." I look forward with eager anticipation to the next chiropractic challenge!

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