

Combat Stress with Chiropractic Care

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We've all experienced stress on one level or another. Maybe your heart sinks into your stomach right before giving a presentation, or your level of anxiety increases while thinking of your to-do list. It's easy to recognize the turmoil that stress wreaks on our mind and body, but what we might not perceive is that even short-lived, minor stress can have an impact on our overall health.

Stress is primarily a physical response. When stress occurs, the body thinks it is under attack and switches to "fight or flight" mode, releasing a complex mix of hormones and chemicals such as adrenaline and cortisol, to prepare the body for physical action. This then causes a bunch of reactions, such as irritability, anger, anxiety, fatigue, and even depression. When factors such as these begin to interfere with your ability to live a normal life, stress becomes even more dangerous.

How Stress Affects Your Systems

Stress is an extremely important indicator of health. The longer stress lasts, the worse it is for not only your physical health but mental health as well. When under stress, different systems of the body become affected such as:

- **Musculoskeletal system** – when muscles tense up, especially around the area of the shoulders, this can cause headaches and migraines.
- **Respiratory system** – while experiencing chronic stress, breathing becomes more difficult. Additionally, high stress has been known to cause rapid breath, hyperventilation, as well as asthma attacks and panic attacks.
- **Cardiovascular system** – ongoing stress causes an increase in heart rate, blood pressure, and hormone levels. When this happens, you risk an increase of a stroke, heart attack or hypertension.
- **Endocrine system** – while stressed, the adrenal glands produce cortisol, increasing your risk of heart disease and diabetes.
- **Nervous system** – the "fight or flight" response puts your body in a state of emergency. This causes the heart to beat faster, respiration rate to increase, blood vessels in the arms and legs to dilate, and the digestive process to change.

Chiropractic Treatment Options

To achieve a healthy function of the nervous system, receiving chiropractic care is essential. This is because chiropractors work primarily with the spine, the root of the nervous system through which nerve impulses make their way from the brain to the rest of the body. Proper spinal alignment is the

first step for reducing stress which is why spinal adjustments and manipulation are favorable treatment methods.

The adjustments release muscle tension, and this helps the body return to a more relaxed, balanced state. Chiropractic care and other stress relief treatments help to reduce cortisol levels and remove toxins from the body. Other chiropractic treatment methods may include massage therapy, a nutritional wellness program, and exercise rehabilitation.