

Chapter 6

Fundamental Keys To Health

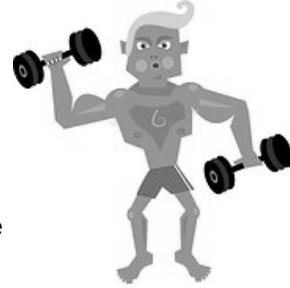
Because today is another chance to get it right.

When a new patient commits to care in my office, I strongly suggest that they attend my Spinal Care class. The reason this class is so important is it gives me a chance to really educate a person on what it is we do and why it is important for them. I also get a chance to get to know my patients on a more casual basis, outside the treatment room. One of the topics we discuss in this class is called The Fundamental Keys to Health. The reason I have this topic in a spinal care class is that I believe that with the overwhelming amount of information on the internet today, trying to decide what to believe in and what to do can be a daunting task, to say the least. One expert may say you need do this to be healthy. The next expert will tell you that if you do that, you will die. The really scary part is that they both have compelling reasons why their concept is true. So in this class I break down the fundamental keys to health, making it simple and easy to implement.



One of the challenges I see with my patients when trying to make some changes to their health is that they are so overwhelmed that they never start anything. When implementing anything in my office, whether it is treatment, a new exercise routine or some daily stretches, I encourage my patients to take baby steps. Create the proper habit for the long haul not for the quick fix. Quick fixes are rarely a fix at all; they are simply a band-aid. Small steps over a lengthy period of time can make a huge difference.

It seems that everyone wants instant results. Regardless of the task, we want to reach our goal now. If we want to lose weight, we want it as fast as possible; so we do a crash diet. Or we want to finally get in shape, so we usually go all out in the beginning then quickly burn out.



If we are in pain, we want instant relief without any reflection on what might be the cause of our pain. This practice does not work and, in fact, can be very harmful. Crash diets usually leaves a person worse off than when they started, becoming heavier than when they began. The inability to stick with an exercise routine is not healthy either; we already talked about some of the ramifications of not addressing the cause of your pain. So the key is baby steps done consistently to make some real changes.

I have several patients that seem to have the same New Year's resolutions year in and year out: Either lose weight or begin an exercise program. After just a few weeks, they begin to fade. And less than a couple of months later, they are completely off track. I see it every year at the gym. The gym gets a bit crowded for the first couple of weeks then people begin to drop off. Within a month, it's back to the normal group. I believe that they tried to do too much. It is difficult to all of a sudden put aside a couple of hours per day to do a new task in your already busy schedule. The enthusiasm keeps you going for a month or so but quickly fades. Not to mention that results do not occur fast enough to fuel this new found enthusiasm. Baby steps is the key.



I put on a workshop called The 3 Biggest Mistakes Most People Make When In Pain, where we discuss this concept of a 1 degree shift in detail. This simple concept helps people make real changes.



Just 1 degree of change done over a year's time can make a **huge** difference. Look, most people are practicing this concept already, by making poor diet choices, eating fast food every now and then, eating a bit too much food every now and then, maybe a few too many desserts. Then bam, all of a sudden it's 10 years later they are 50 pounds heavier. Let's make a small change for the better to create a huge and lasting difference.

So as we go through the fundamental keys to health, think about some of the small changes you could make in each area. Sustain these changes for a lengthy period of time and watch the changes occur. Following is what I believe to be The Five Fundamental Keys to Health and, more importantly, towards a better quality of life.



I assume most people who are on their death bed would gladly give any possession or money away for better health and more time. So while under my care, we implement simple procedures to help a person not only to get out of pain, but improve their overall health for a better quality of life. An example of this would be the daily stretch routine supplied in this book.

So the Fundamental Keys to Health consist of information as to why you should make a change and simple tips on how to make the change.

There are basically five fundamental keys that I believe would support a healthy lifestyle.

In my office it's not just about pain, it's about developing a quality of life. I believe there is a direct correlation between health and quality of life.

Fundamental Key # 1

Proper food, or more precisely, proper nutrients. The bottom line: What we eat and drink is fuel for the body. You truly are what you eat. Everything you put into the tank, so to speak, is broken down and delivered to the various departments. If the product you put into the tank is of poor quality, then the results you will get will be less than optimal. This means the immune system will function less than optimally, your digestion and energy will be less than optimal, and your thinking and rest will be less than optimal. Nutrients affect the whole system. Proper nutrients provide the body with the proper tools to allow you to function with more energy, have less body fat, have better brain function, improve cardiac health and so on.



Proper nutrients will assist your body in fending off diseases like, diabetes, heart disease and even cancer, to name a few. There is not one system in your body that would not improve with better nutrients. Proper nutrition is not about losing body fat. It is about supplying the body what it needs to function at an optimal level.



It is no different than a well run company. Every department in that company has a specific function. As long as that department has all the support and supplies it needs to do its job efficiently, then everything is working at an optimal level. If you deprive a department of some of its support or supplies that are necessary, then that department begins to break down, thus, the whole company begins to function less than optimally. Would this company close down in a week or two? Probably not, but if the problem is not addressed over time, it may have a detrimental effect on the whole company.

So eating that fast food meal every now and then isn't going to shut you down right away, but over time the effects begin to show. Blood pressure begins to rise, cholesterol levels begin to rise, energy begins to decrease; and suddenly, years later, you are now on several medications wondering what happened. "I used to be so young and full of energy" is what I often hear. Don't let this be you. Begin to make some changes in what you put in that valuable body of yours. Say no to fast food and have desserts only once in while. Reduce your alcohol. I'm not saying completely stop it all. But I believe we all can make a few changes that could drastically improve our overall health. Add a few healthy habits to your life. Once you begin to make a few changes in what you put in your body, the way you feel will begin to change. It is a journey worth taking.

The following pages contain some healthy food choices and a bit of information as to why these are good for you. You can start with these as you begin this new path.

*It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold
and silver.*

-Mahatma Gandhi

Key Healthy Foods

HEALTHY GREENS: Contain folate, calcium and other nutrients that support bone health, protect against cognitive decline, and help prevent age-related eye problems. Diets high in cruciferous veggies, such as broccoli and cabbage, help reduce risk of memory loss and cancer.



BERRIES: Blueberries, blackberries, and cranberries are rich in antioxidant compound known as anthocyanins, which have been known to slow the growth of certain cancer cells as well as improve brain function, muscle tone, and balance.



OLIVE OIL: Rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory monounsaturated fats, olive oil figures prominently in the Mediterranean diet. It may explain the lower rates of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and age-related cognitive decline in people who follow this way of eating.



TOMATOES: Certain red fruits, including tomatoes, contain lycopene, an antioxidant compound that helps maintain youthful skin texture and may reduce the risk of some types of cancer (especially prostate, lung, and stomach cancers) as well as heart disease.



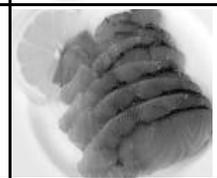
NUTS: Varieties such as almonds and walnuts contain a generous helping of healthy fats, vitamins, and protein that benefit cardiovascular and brain health. Nuts are also high in compounds that ease inflammation.



RED GRAPES: Grapes offer an antioxidant called resveratrol that's been shown to extend the life of lab animals. Resveratrol has anti-inflammatory and anticoagulant properties, which may explain why red wine and purple grape juice also help promote heart health.



FISH: An important part of the Japanese and Mediterranean diet, oily fish provide omega-3 fatty acids that help combat inflammation in the body. People who eat several weekly servings of such fish have a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease.



Fundamental Key # 2

Consistent exercise. There are several opinions out there as to what you should do to stay healthy. I would suggest that the real key to being healthy is being consistent. The benefits of committing to a 10-minute workout every day drastically outweighs trying to commit to doing a 30-minute workout three times per week only to actually getting to two of them because you couldn't fit it in. Doing something on a regular basis day after day, week after week, year after year is the key to lasting change. Of course, I have my suggestions on what that is as well. I have included a simple guide to help create a healthy lifestyle, this is not intended to be for weight loss, body shaping or any other therapies. I would also suggest that you consult your healthcare practitioner prior to performing any exercise program.



When beginning care with a new patient I start them on a daily stretch routine to get the body moving. Once they are pain free, they are encouraged to begin a cardio exercises



program for 10-15 minutes, at the very least, three days per week; preferably every day. I also encourage them to do some form of resistance training such as weight training three times per week; I believe that a program like this will

help improve your health and as a result, your quality of life. I have listed some sample exercise tips below.

Now you have no more excuses! Here are 10 great exercises that you can do at home without the need for any equipment:

Walking – If the weather is nice, it's wonderful to get outside and enjoy the scenery around you while you exercise. However, if the weather has other ideas, you can just as easily get an effective walking workout at home. If you have a flight of stairs, go up and down them a few times. This will help to tone your legs while getting some low impact aerobic exercise as well. If you don't have any stairs available, just walk around the house a few times or you could pace while on the phone. It may not be very exciting, but it will do the job!

Jumping Jacks – These are always fun, as they bring back memories of being a kid! Who hasn't done jumping jacks for fun as a child? Well, surprise – they are also great cardio exercises and good for warming up. They benefit the lymphatic system as well.

Pushups – These are probably not the most favorite exercise for many people, but while they may be hard for most of us to do, there are modifications you can make so they are easier to do. You don't need to pretend you're Rocky and do them with one hand; just do what works for you. Do them on your knees instead of keeping your legs straight. Do them standing up against a wall or use a chair. However you do them you will be building up arm strength and muscles in your chest area.

Leg Lifts – These are great for building strength and muscle in your legs. If you find it hard to do the exercises with your legs straight, try bending them slightly.

Crunches – The best exercise for building and strengthening abdominal muscles. When you're just getting started, don't worry about getting your head all the way up. So long as you're going up until you feel the flexing of the muscles, you will see some benefit.

Jogging In Place – Jogging is a great exercise for your heart. You can jog in place at home while watching TV or listening to music.

Squats-These are wonderful exercises for your legs and buttocks. You can do squats by simply getting up and down off a chair. You can use a large fitness ball to lean on against the wall to help you perform the exercise or simply do body squats. As long as you're able to do a few repetitions, you will provide some benefit to your body.

Light Weight Lifting – No, you don't need to go out and buy expensive weights for this! Just use whatever you can find in your house. Start out with something lighter, such as a can of peas, and work yourself up to heavier items. You can use milk jugs, laundry detergent bottles, or even water jugs. Exercise bands are a good alternative to having clunky weights around.



Dancing – Dancing is a wonderful exercise especially for your heart. Not only that, but it can lift your spirits as well, and give your overall mood a boost.

Step Exercises – By using the steps in your home, you can do repetitions which will tone your leg muscles. (Just remember to be careful!)

Fundamental Key # 3

Sleep and recovery. It is suggested that you receive a full 7-8 hours of rest per night. The reason is this is the time your body does much of its repair work from both injuries and daily activities. This is when a boost to the immune system occurs. Finally, from a chiropractic perspective, this is when the discs between your vertebrae become rehydrated. This is why you feel taller when you wake up first thing in the morning. If you are misaligned and dealing with some back pain or neck pain, this is also why your back pain is much worse upon getting up in the morning.

If that is you, you may want to get an adjustment.

I commonly hear from my patients that they never get enough sleep, especially being in Silicon Valley. They either go to bed just after being on the computer or they have too much on their mind to just go to sleep. They can't just turn their mind off. I suggest that you change the focus of your mind. Here are a few tips that have seemed to help my patients.

If you are unable to get that much sleep at one time, I would highly suggest a nap. I believe a nap can do wonders for you even if it is for only 15 minutes.

Relaxing bedtime rituals to try



- Read a book or magazine by a soft light
- Take a warm bath
- Listen to soft music
- Do some easy stretches
- Wind down with a favorite hobby
- Listen to books on tape
- Make simple preparations for the next day
- Write down what's on your mind, then let it go

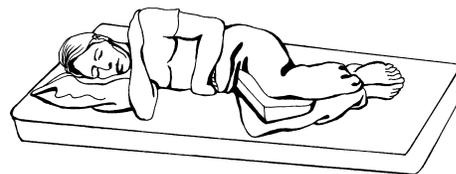


Another tip my wife and I use is a sound machine. What a great way to calm down and relax to the sound of the beach or a rain forest.

I've suggested this to many of my patients and they have all been pleased. This is helpful for those who have spouses that snore!

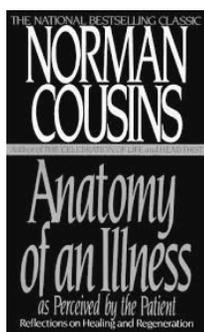
The Harvard Women's Health Watch suggests six reasons to get enough sleep:

1. Learning and memory: Sleep helps the brain commit new information to memory through a process called memory consolidation. In studies, people who'd slept after learning a task did better on tests later.
2. Metabolism and weight: Chronic sleep deprivation may cause weight gain by affecting the way our bodies process and store carbohydrates, and by altering levels of hormones that affect our appetite.
3. Safety: Sleep debt contributes to a greater tendency to fall asleep during the daytime. These lapses may cause falls and mistakes such as medical errors, air traffic mishaps, and road accidents.
4. Mood: Sleep loss may result in irritability, impatience, inability to concentrate and moodiness. Too little sleep can also leave you too tired to do the things you like to do.
5. Cardiovascular health: Serious sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, increased stress hormone levels and irregular heartbeat.
6. Disease: Sleep deprivation alters immune function, including the activity of the body's killer cells. Keeping up with sleep may also help fight cancer.



Fundamental Key # 4

Positive Mental Attitude. There have been numerous studies done on the effects of having a positive outlook on life. There have been records of miraculous cures by simply putting a person in front of funny movies for days at a time. Having a positive attitude will help drastically reduce stress which, as I mentioned earlier, is being linked as a major contributor to nearly all illnesses. If you can go through life with a choice on how you feel, why not choose to be happy. I understand there are moments that cause pain, but let's try and make these moments brief and not allow them to fester for hours or days, or worse, weeks to years. Life is too short! When I said to choose, I mean you do have a choice. It is your choice on how you are going to feel about any situation.



One of my favorite books is called "Anatomy of an Illness." It is written by Norman Cousins and basically discusses how he healed himself from a very devastating disease through laughter and by actively participating in his care with his doctors. I highly recommend this book to all my patients. It is a testament of how amazing your body is and what feats your body can perform, if given a chance. Attitude has a lot to do with it. There are actual physiological responses to your body, based on how you feel. To put it simply, your body can react to how you think.

"Thousands of articles in virtually all popular, medical, health and news journals tout the benefits of having a positive mental attitude on longevity

and many other positive aspects of aging," says Dr. Peter Norvid, a geriatric specialist treating patients at Adventist Hinsdale and La Grange Memorial hospitals and medical director for Heartland Hospice.



People who are optimistic live longer, have closer personal relationships and are able to deal with the negative things that happen to them in a way that allows them to continue to be able to be there for others.

Having a positive outlook helps people better cope with the challenges life brings, including dealing with the challenges of death. These people have an easier transition and allow those around them to feel more comfortable.

Having a positive mental attitude helps the body and mind work in unity to bring health and well-being. A positive mental attitude, having feelings of inner peace and happiness contributes to the proper functioning of the immune system. A strong immune system protects us from various illnesses and diseases like cancer, and can also help us recover as well. A positive mental attitude is an important aspect of good health.

As with any other habit, it takes time to create a change. As I said before, small changes done consistently over a period of time can make a significant impact. The following page contains some affirmations that may help you create a better attitude toward a specific subject. Pick one or a few and repeat them on a daily basis. Yell them out if you have to. Put emotion and feeling into it and watch things change before your eyes.

You can't have a positive life with a negative mind

EXAMPLE AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations for health

- Every cell in my body vibrates with energy and health
- Loving myself heals my life. I nourish my mind, body and soul
- My body heals quickly and easily

Affirmations for abundance

- I prosper wherever I turn, and I know I deserve prosperity of all kinds
- The more grateful I am, the more reason I have to be grateful
- I pay my bills with love as I know abundance flows freely through me

Affirmations for weight loss

- I am the perfect weight for me
- I choose to make positive health choices for myself
- I choose to exercise regularly

Affirmations for romance

- I have a wonderful partner and we are happy and at peace
- I release any desperation and allow love to find me
- I attract only healthy relationships

Affirmations for self-esteem

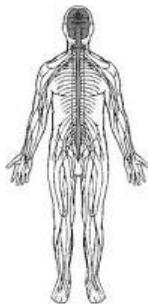
- When I believe in myself, so do others
- I express my needs and feelings
- I am my own unique self; special, creative, and wonderful

Affirmations for joy and happiness

- Life is a joy filled with delightful surprises
- My life is a joy filled with love, fun and friendship.
- I choose love, joy and freedom. I open my heart and allow wonderful things to flow into my life

Fundamental Key # 5

And last, but certainly not least, a sound nervous system. The nervous system is in charge of controlling **all** functions in the body. Nothing, and I mean nothing, gets done without the



nervous systems involvement. The brain communicates to the body through nerves that travel through the spinal column. So the nervous system and spinal column are very important. Any interference to the nervous system will reduce the nerve's ability to transmit information, or it will transfer the wrong information, and the nerve supply becomes compromised. Some indications of a possible nervous system interference include

back pain, neck pain, radiating pain, numbness and tingling, muscle weakness, headaches and even stomach aches, to name a few.

Chronic poor posture can be an indication of possible nerve interference and is usually a result of prolonged muscle imbalances that cause weakness and an



increase in tonicity in opposing muscles. Over time this can lead to loss of joint mobility in the spine, causing a segment or several segments to become fixated and irritated. This chronic irritation may become inflamed, choking the adjacent nerve and interfering with that nerve's ability to communicate properly. This can cause a host of discomforts such as local pain, radiating pain, loss of mobility and muscle

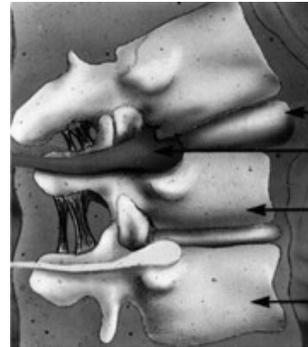


aches. This condition can also have no symptoms at all, which is what makes this condition challenging. It is what chiropractors call a subluxation.

Subluxations can occur from a single incident or can develop over a lengthy period of time.

In the area I practice, Silicon Valley, I frequently see a patient in pain who believes their condition came on suddenly. However, after a thorough evaluation, we discover that it is a condition that has developed unnoticed over several years.

It is difficult for a patient to bridge that gap of feeling great one day then, after a seemingly innocent maneuver, sudden severe pain occurs. This sudden onset of severe pain gives the patient the illusion a quick solution can be had. That and a strong desire to get rid of this intense pain. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. It would seem that it just came on, however, after years of constant strain on the body, it could no longer handle the strain and it let go. The key is to not ignore the warning signs and get checked for subluxations by a chiropractor. The most common cause of nerve interference is a subluxation.

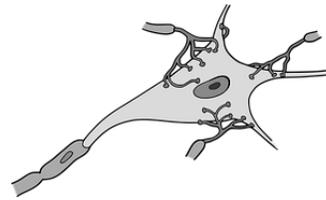


VERTEBRAL SUBLUXATION COMPLEX

(Technical Jargon)

The vertebral subluxation complex is a receptor driven compensation or mechanical adaptation to stress (physical, mental, metabolic, etc.) It is modulated by the central nervous system (CNS). Adjustments can alter the subluxation complex. In fact, the most powerful neurological treatment involving any sensory system is through the stimulation of these receptors because they involve the only pathways that bare constant active, gravitational pathways (involving muscle spindles and joint mechanoreceptors). Vision, sound and smell are turned off every day.

However, gravity is always working and constantly pulling on joint and muscle spindles to cause the creation of electronic receptor potentials. These action potentials powerfully shape the CNS and, therefore, shape all other systems including the autonomic nervous system. Gravity's constant barrage of sensory information allows the adjustments to summate and change the CNS. We now know that these changes effect genetic expression or cellular immediate early gene responses (CIEGR). For gene expression to occur, the fuel for the cellular metabolism is from glucose. The promotion of aerobic respiration is from oxygen; but the activation necessary is from muscle spindles, which do not rest.



Cellular proteins must be constantly replaced in order to sustain life in the organism as well as the cell. The half-life of protein is generally 6-10 days. For proteins to remain viable, there must be CIEGR integration. Receptor potentiating is vital to this process. Adjustments not only help reduce the pain and help return an irritated segment to normalcy, they also have varying degrees of summation to the CNS.

One of my major challenges in helping a person who is dealing with a chronic condition, that has them experiencing episodes of pain that can vary in frequency and in intensity, is the difficulty of getting the patient to grasp the idea that this pain is probably a result of a very complex problem. Chronic inflammation from old nagging injuries that never healed properly contain adhesive tissues. These tissues have trapped cells causing scar tissue to develop, further hindering that segments ability to move properly.

The longer this condition is allowed to exist, the more scaring and restriction the area will be exposed to.



It isn't until a person has such a severe episode that causes them to seek emergency care where x-rays are taken that they discover they have spinal degeneration; a relentless condition that continues to progress if not attended to. This is what I am trying to help people prevent. Adjustments help prevent this!

Many people are fearful of adjustments because they believe it may hurt, or it looks and sounds like it hurts. I grew up watching Bruce Lee and a lot of his moves with an enemy's neck could look like an adjustment. No wonder people are fearful of a neck adjustment. The reality is that for most people it is a painless event. Most people get great relief from an adjustment. Initially, and depending on your situation, you may be a bit sore after an adjustment or two. But this is just old trapped inflammatory chemicals and scar tissue breaking up and freeing the area. It is similar to the pain you feel after an aggressive exercise

No amount of exercise or physical therapy can help a severely fixated segment to return to normal motion. This is why I urge people who are dealing with a chronic condition to, at the very least, consult a chiropractor.

"It is best to act with confidence, no matter how little right you have to it."

-Lillian Hellman