



The Chiropractic Way: How Chiropractic Care Can Stop Your Pain and Help You Regain Your Health Without Drugs or Surgery

By Michael Lenarz, Victoria St. George

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Chiropractic has become America's most popular form of alternative health care, offering lasting relief from pain--and many other health benefits--to more than 25 million patients annually. Yet many people still wonder exactly how chiropractic heals, and even experienced patients may be able to get more from their treatments. In this accessible and fascinating book, Dr. Michael Lenarz illuminates the basic principles of spinal health, showing how the body naturally lets go of stored pain and disease once the flow of vital energy has been restored. He also explains:

- *Why adjustments keep the communication flowing clearly, quickly, and cleanly
- *Why the billion-plus nerve pathways carried by the spine can be the key to a wide range of health problems--from arthritis, headaches, and back and neck pain to chronic fatigue and digestive ailments
- *Why many of the health complaints we associate with aging may in fact be the result of old injuries and therefore treatable
- *The different techniques of chiropractic, and how to choose the best chiropractor for you.

PLUS--complete chapters on the diet, exercise, and stress-relief programs that will help you achieve a healthy, vibrant, energized, and pain-free lifestyle--the chiropractic way.

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- Sales Rank: #1328101 in eBooks
- Published on: 2008-12-10
- Released on: 2008-12-10
- Format: Kindle eBook



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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

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About the Author

Michael Lenarz received his doctor of chiropractic degree from Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he received the B. J. Palmer Philosophical Distinction Award. He is an extension faculty member for Sherman College and for Logan Chiropractic College in Kansas City, Missouri, and a committee member for the Blair Chiropractic Society. Dr. Lenarz has been in practice for fifteen years and operates three chiropractic offices in Seattle and western Washington. Dr. Lenarz is also a practice management consultant for chiropractors and speaks at chiropractic events nationwide.

Victoria St. George is a writer and editor living in Santa Monica, California. She is also a partner in Just Write, a literary services firm with offices in California and Virginia.

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Part I

The Principles

How Chiropractic Care Can Stop Pain and Help You Regain Your Health

Winifred is a feisty seventy-six-year-old lady with a mischievous smile. She came to my office because she was experiencing chronic back pain and a lack of energy. In the course of my examination, she revealed that she suffered from emphysema, which caused extreme shortness of breath and limited her physical activities. Sleep apnea also caused her to wake up three to five times a night. She was very direct and told me up front that she considered chiropractors "quacks" and the people who swore by them "fruitcakes." (Winifred has never been afraid of speaking her mind.) But she felt conventional medicine offered her only medication, which she had already found unhelpful, and she was afraid of its possible side effects.

I measured Winifred's range of motion, X-rayed her spine and neck, and determined that a course of chiropractic adjustments would help correct certain misalignments in her spine. I recommended a course of treatment consisting of three visits a week the first two weeks and two visits a week the next four weeks, and then we'd see how things were going. Winifred was skeptical-she's a real "show me" lady-but she agreed to give chiropractic a try.

After she noticed significant improvement within a few visits, she told me, "Dr. Lenarz, if I could find some reason other than the chiropractic treatment, I would gladly put the credit elsewhere." But she couldn't ignore the fact that her back pain was gone, her sleep was much improved, and even her emphysema eased significantly. She found she had more energy and stamina. At one visit she bragged that she had taken a ten-hour car trip with no pain or stiffness-and at her age, she said, that was remarkable.

Winifred is typical of many chiropractic patients: They come to the chiropractor as a second, third, or even last resort. Many have tried to handle their conditions with conventional medicine, only to be disappointed with the results. They walk into the chiropractor's office dubiously, not sure whether this new kind of treatment will help, but often desperate for any relief. Like Winifred, they've heard all kinds of bad things about chiropractors: that they're not "real" doctors; that they twist, push, and pull you and cause lots of pain; that the results are temporary at best; and that patients have to keep coming for the rest of their lives to get any real benefit.

With all that bad press, why on earth do people continue to go to chiropractors? And with the forces of conventional medicine arrayed against the practice of chiropractic for most of its hundred-year history, why is chiropractic still the second-largest health care system in America and the largest drug-free healing profession in the world? For one very simple and obvious reason: Chiropractic works. Every year millions of people use chiropractic to eliminate their pain, and in the process they discover a new approach to health and well-being.

In numerous studies chiropractic has proven to be one of the most effective treatments for back pain, neck pain, headaches, and other musculoskeletal ailments. But at its foundation chiropractic is not really about treatment of pain (although it is very effective at doing so). In chiropractic philosophy, pain relief is really just the side effect of a properly functioning spinal system. Other side effects of chiropractic care include relief from many other conditions and diseases-everything from chronic tonsillitis to high blood pressure to ear problems to digestive ailments and more. Chiropractic treatments help millions of people to live healthier, happier lives, because they restore the body to its proper and natural state.

If you, like Winifred, are skeptical, or if you simply want to know more about chiropractic, I hope this book will show you how you can benefit from incorporating chiropractic into your health care regimen. If you are already going to a chiropractor, you'll learn more about the principles underlying the results you have experienced. Chiropractic is so much more than simply a means of relieving pain; it is a way to a healthier life. Chiropractors believe that health is our natural state and that it can best be maintained through supporting the body in a natural, noninvasive way. Chiropractic philosophy is based on restoring the body's natural functioning and eliminating obstacles to health rather than treating symptoms or curing disease.

Strangely enough, it seems that science is finally catching up with what chiropractors have believed all along. The underlying theories of chiropractic as articulated by its founders over a hundred years ago are in line with some of the most cutting-edge research in the field of mind-body medicine. And even though the relationship between conventional medicine and chiropractic is uneasy at best, scientific evidence of the efficacy of chiropractic treatment is mounting every day.

What Is Chiropractic?

If you ask most people what a chiropractor does, their answer will be, "He cracks your back." If you ask what's called a "narrow scope" chiropractor the same question, you'll hear, "A chiropractor reduces subluxations that impede the normal functioning of the spine. Once these subluxations are reduced, normal function can be restored." (You'll learn about subluxations in Chapter 5.) If you ask a "broad scope" chiropractor, you might hear, "We use a variety of techniques that allow the body's natural state of health to express itself fully." And if you ask many conventional medical doctors, you'll hear, "A chiropractor does very little at all, and nothing of any lasting value."

Obviously, I don't subscribe to the last statement, but none of the other statements is a full picture of chiropractic, either. Chiropractic is a science, an art, and a philosophy. It is a science that deals primarily with the spine and central nervous system. Like conventional medicine, it is based upon scientific principles of (1) diagnosis through testing and empirical observation and (2) treatment based upon the practitioner's rigorous training and clinical experience. Unlike conventional medicine, which relies primarily on drugs and/or surgery to heal disease, chiropractic uses manual manipulation, or adjustments, of the spine to correct large or small misalignments that have affected the proper flow of communication between the brain, the nervous system, and the rest of the body. Once the spine is realigned to its proper position, the nerves can do their job without impediment, and the patient experiences greater health.

Like conventional medicine, chiropractic is not just a science; it is also an art. Only in the case of chiropractic, it is the art of all things natural. The function of chiropractic is not to heal disease or even to relieve pain, although both of those effects may occur in the course of chiropractic treatment. Ultimately, the goal of the chiropractic art is to restore the body to its natural state, which is one of radiant health. In the pursuit of this art, chiropractors work with the body's own energy, guiding bones and tissues that have been damaged through trauma or misuse back to their correct positions. When the bones and soft tissues are returned to their proper states, the vital pathway between the brain and the body is restored. Then the chemical, neurological, and mechanical processes of the body function as they are supposed to.

But perhaps most important, chiropractic is a powerful, rich, and meticulous philosophy about the causes of life, health, and disease. Chiropractic believes that inside each of us is an innate wisdom that wants to express itself as perfect health and well-being. Chiropractic's primary focus is simply to remove any physiological blocks to the proper expression of the body's innate wisdom; once those blocks are removed, health is the natural result.

I believe chiropractic philosophy has the potential to cause a worldwide revolution in healing, one that can bring a deeper understanding and create a safer and saner health care industry. But perhaps most important, chiropractic can make a difference in your life. It can help you grasp the true nature of health and disease. I know that for my patients and myself, chiropractic helps us to realize that health is a simple, attainable goal. With that knowledge, we can take control of our own health care choices on a completely new level.

A Brief History of an Ancient Practice

Manipulation and/or adjustment of the spine have existed since the beginning of human civilization. An ancient Chinese text indicates that manipulation techniques were being used in that country as early as 2700 b.c.e. In Egypt, a fragment of papyrus dating from 1600 b.c.e. describes a treatment for a dislocated jaw: "Put your two thumbs upon the end of the two rami of the mandible [jawbone] inside his mouth and your fingers under his chin, and you should cause them to fall back so that they rest in their places." Societies all over the ancient world-Babylon, Syria, India, Tibet, Japan; Native American tribes such as the Sioux,

Winnebago, and Creek; South American groups of Mayan, Aztec, Toltec, Tarascan, and Zoltec Indians, and the Incas-practiced manipulation as a means of relieving pain and restoring the body to normal function.

Conventional Western medicine, however, traces its roots back to ancient Greece. Over twenty-four hundred years ago, around 400 b.c.e., in the school of the great physician Hippocrates (the legendary father of what we call today "conventional" medicine), students were taught that disease was not a result of supernatural forces or the displeasure of the gods, as had once been believed. Instead, the Hippocratic philosophy was based on the premise that a human body was subject to the same forces and laws as nature itself. Therefore, it was possible for humankind to have a role in the curing of disease and the main...

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