

Understanding your Upper Cervical Correction

The Problem

Long term postural stress or injury to the spine disrupts normal function or can even tear loose the connective tissue, ligaments, and muscles responsible for maintaining normal posture and alignment. This causes stress and altered nerve flow to and from the brain and creates posture distortion and body imbalance as the entire spine shifts off center. (see "A Closer Look" below).

The Correction

Utilizing a very precise system of X-ray analysis developed by Dr. John F. Grostic, which is based on physics and math, we calculate the precise correction (reduction pathway) and force necessary to gently bring your head, neck and atlas back into alignment. These highly sophisticated calculations allow us to correct this complex and delicate region of the spine with very little force and no "twisting" or "popping" of the neck. In fact, most patients don't even feel the adjustment. As the correction in the upper neck is achieved the entire body is brought back into balance as stress on posture nerves feeding the brain stem is relieved. This is why people with problems even in the lower part of their body respond well to the Orthospinology upper cervical correction.

The Orthospinology Difference

The upper cervical misalignment is the most complex and difficult region of the spine to align, but when correction is achieved the results can be simply amazing. You will notice changes throughout your body as normal alignment and posture are restored. It takes a tremendous amount of training to deliver a quality Orthospinology correction but you need and deserve the best care possible and that's why we have dedicated ourselves to mastering this procedure.

My Rotational Displacement - How Did I Get This Way?

The misalignment you see is the result of one or more injuries in your past. Many injuries can be traced as far back as childhood: That header off the top bunk, a tumble down the steps, the fall off the bike, hayloft, or backyard tree. Or perhaps it was that teenage gymnastics injury or auto accident? Think back and you'll probably come up with a few possibilities of your own.

Regardless of the cause, a vast majority of people are left with some sort of upper neck misalignment and posture distortion by the time they reach adulthood. Keep in mind that these misalignments often remain pain-free until a more recent injury occurs. Or sometimes, simply having the underlying misalignment and body imbalance present for years will catch up to us as spinal joints

and discs degenerate prematurely (see “How Does This Affect My Health”). This is similar to what happens with tooth decay. A cavity can exist for years before the tooth causes pain.

A Closer Look

Posture And Body Balance

The lower brainstem controls posture and balance. Misalignment and stress in the upper neck causes the muscles along each side of the spine to pull unevenly and shift the entire body off center. See “The Bigger Picture” to learn how stress on these posture control centers affect the entire body.

Blood Pressure, Respiration and Heart Rate

The neurological centers for control of these body functions are located in the lower brainstem and can be adversely affected by upper neck misalignment. Recent research has proven the upper cervical correction helps people with high blood pressure. Google “upper cervical” and “blood pressure” to view the results of this research.

Sleep / Mood

Serotonin is a chemical produced in the lower brain stem. Serotonin influences various functions, including regulation of mood, sleep, appetite, muscle contraction, and some cognitive functions including memory and learning. Upper neck misalignment causing stress on the lower brain stem can have a dramatic effect on a person’s energy and overall sense of “aliveness” as is the case with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia.

Immune Function

The Autonomic Nervous System controls all of the body functions that we don’t have to think about. The Sympathetic Nervous System is that part of our Autonomic Nervous System that becomes more active during times of stress and is often called the fight-or-flight response. Upper neck misalignment creates long term activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System which is known to suppress the body’s Immune System.

Digestion

The Vagus nerve is very influential in regulating digestion and elimination. This important nerve is often affected by misalignment of the upper neck because it passes right next to the atlas vertebra as it comes down from the brain.

Facial Problems

Cranial Nerve dysfunction can result in problems such as Trigeminal Neuralgia, Bell's Palsy, Meniere's Disease, Sinus Problems, Ear Pressure, Dizziness, etc. Patients with these problems often respond to the Orthospinology correction since cranial nerves have tracts that descend into the upper neck

The Bigger Picture

Injury to the upper neck has a global effect on the body. When the head and neck are misaligned due to injury, the first cervical vertebra no longer positions squarely under the head. This shifting of the atlas causes stress and miscommunication affecting posture control centers in the lower brainstem. Posture muscles that run along one side of the spine pull harder than muscles on the other side. The result is the picture you see here.

Notice the short leg, uneven hips, high shoulder and head tilt. Look closely at your friends and family as they face you and you may be able to tell if they should be referred for an evaluation. When you click on the "Show Correction" button you will see how the Orthospinology upper cervical correction is a correction of the entire spine from the top down!

Body imbalance has a very negative long term effect on spinal discs. When the body's weight is not distributed evenly across the discs, premature degenerative disc disease, herniation and even a closing down of spinal nerve canals (stenosis) can result. Just as driving your car with the front end out of align causes premature tire wear, long term body imbalance causes your spine to age quicker. The difference between a 75 year-old on the golf course and a 75 year-old pushing a walker is usually found in their spines!

How Does This Affect My Health?

The nervous system controls and regulates every function of the body, most of which we don't consciously think about, such as heart rate, breathing, digestion, etc. That is why the nervous system is the very first body part to develop in the mother's womb.

The spine is one of the very next body parts to develop in order to house and protect this delicate nervous system. It does a good job of this protection until injury damages the spine itself causing it to misalign. Now instead of protecting the nervous system, the spine begins to harm it. The common term for nerve stress caused by misalignment of the spine is subluxation. The upper two vertebrae in the neck account for almost half of our head movements. For this reason, they are especially vulnerable to injury and subluxation. Combined with the fact that the brainstem, which is

the nervous system's "Grand Central Station", passes through the first cervical vertebra, problems here tend to have a more detrimental effect on the body.

1. Misalignment of the spine can cause direct pressure on the spinal cord and/or the delicate nerves that exit between each vertebrae of the spine. As a result, any body part served by these nerves that loses its flow of energy to and from the brain because of this pressure will not function properly. For example, if the nerve that supplies the stomach is stressed, problems such as indigestion, heartburn, reflux, bloating and gas can occur.

2. Body imbalance creates an ongoing structural and neurological stress to the body. The body responds to stress by activating the sympathetic nervous system. Long term sympathetic nervous system activity has been proven to cause the immune system to be suppressed. In other words, your immune system doesn't work as well when the body is under long term stress and imbalance.

3. Long term body imbalance causes premature aging and degeneration of the spine itself. Arthritis is the more common term for this wear and tear. As spinal degeneration becomes advanced, the vertebrae themselves encroach upon the spinal nerves causing them to slowly lose their ability to transmit vital brain messages. Doctors refer to this condition as spinal stenosis.

[How Do I Maintain Correction?](#)

Many patients ask this question: If the correction is so gentle, what keeps it in place and won't the slightest of movements cause it to misalign again? The answer lies with your nervous system and how well you follow after care instructions:

Your Nervous System's Role

Spinal misalignment is perpetuated by ongoing stress and miscommunication to the nerves that control posture and body balance. This is why your spine hasn't corrected on its own. Once an exact corrective force is delivered to the upper spine and nerve flow is normalized, the posture control centers in the brain can keep your spine in its upright, vertically aligned position. When the posture muscles are balanced the spine is much more stable and becomes more difficult to misalign with time.

Your Role

It is important for you to follow all of your doctor's recommendations in caring for your spine following a correction. As a general rule of thumb follow these guidelines after a correction:

The Same Day – Be cautious with your head movements. Avoid any extreme or quick movements but at the same time don't walk around too stiff necked. Limit looking up or reaching up and be careful turning your head sharply – like looking behind to back up.

The First Three Days – Be cautious with head positions. If you are seated next to someone at the dinner table, don't sit with your head turned for a half-hour talking to that person. You can move your head in normal ways just don't remain in non-neutral positions for too long.

The First Two Weeks – Avoid extreme physical activity, prolonged abnormal postures or heavy lifting. Your ceiling painting project or boulder wall project can wait. For some, this may be impossible because of the demands of your work or sport, but two wrongs don't make a right. If you have to lift at work, avoid it at home for the first few weeks.

Phases Of Degeneration

Normal Cervical Spine

The first and most important job of the spine is to house and protect the Nervous System. Normal spinal curves and healthy discs provide maximum protection and optimal function of the nervous system. The process of spine and nervous system breakdown and decay is called Subluxation Degeneration.

Characteristics of a Normal Cervical Spine include:

- Healthy
- Pain Free
- Physically Fit
- Stress Free

Phase I: 5-15 Years of Adaptation

Uncorrected spinal trauma results in loss of normal curve, disc narrowing and subtle spine and nerve malfunction. Because the body is so adaptable, this early phase can exist without the warning of pain or other symptoms. If left uncorrected, the degeneration continues.

Common symptoms of Phase I Degeneration include:

- Headaches
- Neck Pain

- Strained Muscles
- Shoulder Tension

Phase II: 15-30 Years of Adaptation

Recognized on x-ray by visible bone spurs and rough edges of the vertebrae. Abnormal bony growths distort the shape and function of the vertebrae and cause stress to discs, joints and ligaments. Breakdown of these soft tissues results in lack of normal joint movement, inflammation and interference to nerve flow.

Common symptoms of Phase II Degeneration include:

- Arthritis
- Disc Disease
- Degenerated Joints
- Fatigue
- Joint Pain

Phase III: 30+ Years of Adaptation

A lifetime of neglect may cause the eventual fusion of the malfunctioning joints. Atrophy, permanent nerve damage, and soft tissue degeneration are prevalent. Reduced mobility and impaired nervous system function, diminish one's quality of life.

Common symptoms of Phase III Degeneration include:

- Chronic Pain
- Irreversible Damage
- Spine Disease (stenosis)
- Relief Care Only

Remember: The difference between a 75 year-old on the golf course and a 75 year-old pushing a walker – Simply take a look at their spines!

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