What Makes A Great Chiropractor?

stephen M. swaringen, dc 08/09/18

Let’s begin by defining chiropractic. Chiropractic is defined as a system of complementary medicine based on the diagnosis and manipulative treatment of misalignments of the joints, especially those of the spinal column, which are held to cause other disorders by affecting the nerves, muscles, and organs.

Next, let’s understand what separates one chiropractor from the next. The three leading philosophies today are upper cervical chiropractic, straight chiropractic, and mixing chiropractic.

Upper cervical chiropractors focus their attention on the base of the skull and the top two bones (atlas and axis) of the spine. Their philosophy is focused on relieving pressure from the brainstem and surrounding nerves to improve the flow of neurological communication from the brain to the rest of the body. Their approach typically consists of X-rays, palpatory and instrumentation diagnostics with the main focus being on manipulation of the upper neck.

Straight (traditional) chiropractors are the most common form of chiropractic you will encounter today. Focusing on full body manipulation (adjustments) to restore function and health while including passive modalities such as electrical stimulation, heat/ice, ultrasound, and decompression to name a few. The adjustment is at the center of their treatment plans, while utilizing the passive modalities for pain and soft tissue management.

Mixing is a philosophy found in a growing number of current chiropractic practitioners. Mixing incorporates a limitless approach to injury, illness, and lifestyle, and is in my opinion, the future of chiropractic. Derived from a chiropractor’s expertise of the musculoskeletal and neurological systems, mixing involves the inclusion of modern medicine and physical therapy. Specializing in advanced soft tissue techniques like ART, pre/post surgical rehabilitation, strength and conditioning, and nutrition to name a few, the approach of a Mixer is wide ranging.

Finding the right chiropractor for you and your family is essential. All three philosophies yield results. Evaluate your own goals and expectations, research the different doctors in your community, and give them a try. Trusting your doctor’s scope and approach is just as important as the treatment itself.