

Daily in my interactions with my patients and in the [Bellevue](#) community I am asked one simple question over and over. That question is "How do I know if my friends or family need to be seeing a chiropractor?" It's a great question! I have developed 10 tests and questions that can determine if you need to be evaluated by a doctor of chiropractic.

## The Shoulder Pinch Test

Have you ever had someone give you a back rub and felt that your shoulders were very sore? That soreness can be from dysfunction in the bones that those muscles are connected into. Try this...take your pointer finger and your thumb and gently pinch your trapezius muscle (this is your shoulder muscle). Is it sore? If so this may be due to referred pain (pain that comes from a problem somewhere else), or trigger points in the muscle.

*(YES)* This may be due to referred pain (pain that comes from a problem somewhere else), or trigger points in the muscle. There are many times that muscle pain and soreness are due to areas of the spine that are out of place. Because the muscles hook into the bones, when the bones pull out of place they pull on the muscles and create dysfunction. Daily, as a chiropractor I find that when I correct the spinal problem the muscle problem goes away.

## The Head Turn Test

Try turning your head as far as you can to the left and to the right. The first thing that you want to look for is if either of these motions are painful at all. The second thing that you will want to look for in this test is if on one side or the other (either right or left) you can turn further than the other side. Normal range of motion (or being able to turn your head to the right and the left) is being able to turn your nose parallel with your shoulder. Is there pain on these movements or are any of them reduced?

*(YES)* If there is any pain or if one side or the other is unable to turn as far as the other side this can be a possible sign that there is something wrong in the bones of the neck. From the time that we are born our necks go through a lot of abuse. From the actual birthing process, falling while learning how to walk, to the many injuries that we get through life, the neck is vulnerable to being injured. A Chiropractor would be able to diagnose exactly what the cause of the pain is or what is causing the reduced range of motion in your neck. Many times when you experience pain or reduced range of motion in your neck this means that either the joints that connect the bones are stuck in place, or that the bones are out of alignment. These problems may lead to headaches, neck pain, shoulder pain, arm and hand pain, and many other more severe problems. Joints that are stuck and bones that are out of place are what chiropractors primarily treat on a daily basis. This is one big sign that you should be seeing a chiropractor.

## The Stand on One Leg Test

Get up out of your chair for the next test to see if you need to be seeing a [Chiropractor](#). Standing up straight close both eyes. Now with your eyes closed try to stand on just one leg for as long as you can. No peaking! Not as easy as it sounds is it? Now try doing the same thing with the other foot. You should have no problem standing on one leg for 20-30 seconds. How did you do?

*(0-20 seconds)* If you had a problem getting to 10 seconds let alone 30 this may be a sign that there is some dysfunction in the joints of your body. Each joint of the body from the tips of your toes to the top of your head has little sensors in them that are linked to the brain. These little

sensors tell the brain where the body is at in gravity. Try this little activity to show these joint sensors in action. Close your eyes again...don't worry no more standing on one foot...extend your arm and index finger out to the side as far as you can, and with your eyes closed touch the tip of your nose (yes this is the drunk person test!). The fact that you were able to touch your nose and know where your arm was with your eyes closed shows that the sensors in your elbow and shoulder are working fine. The problem comes when the joints get injured. An injury to any joint of the body, but especially the joints in the low back, pelvis, and legs will disrupt the joint sensors ability to tell you where you are at with your eyes closed. So if you had a hard time standing on one leg for very long, it may mean that your joints are not working as well as they should be. When you go to the Chiropractor they will be able to diagnose the specific joints that are not working and make adjustments to those joints to restore function. Proper function in the joints means your brain can once again communicate with your body!

*(20-30 seconds)* Wow, I am impressed! Amazingly enough many people have a hard time making it to 10 seconds let alone 30! When the joints of the body can not tell the brain where they are at, imbalance occurs. This miscommunication most commonly occurs when the joints are damaged (like a sprained ankle), or if they are in dysfunction (because they are out of place, or stuck in place). Chiropractors help joints heal and work in a proper manner, allowing the joints to communicate with the brain.

## Have You Ever Been in a Car Accident?

*(YES)* If you have been in a car accident of any kind lately you need to be seeing a Chiropractor. [Car accidents](#) can, and usually do cause injury to the neck and even the low back that, if left untreated can lead to worse problems in the future and even degeneration of the spine. Recent research suggests that even low impact (or fender benders of even 5MPH) can cause damage to the spine, and especially the bones of the neck. A Chiropractor will evaluate your spine by doing specific tests as well as take x-rays to look for any damage to the bones and motion x-rays to look for any damage to the ligaments (the things holding the bones together), and joints.

## Do You Have Decreased Energy?

*(Yes)* Low energy can be an indication that there is a problem going on in the body. Poor diet, poor sleeping habits, even dehydration can be causes of low energy levels. Another common reason is improper mechanics in the joints of the body and especially the spine that takes a huge toll on the body. The longer that this dysfunction stays in the joints the more likely it is that you will use much more energy to the same activities that before used little to no energy. A chiropractor is able to diagnose poor joint function, correct the problem and allow your body to return to the way that it was meant to function.

## Are You Achy in Morning?

*(YES)* Waking up stiff and achy in the morning is a sign that there is a problem in the joints of the body. When a joint in the body is not working the way it should because it is out of place, it is sprained, or if it is not moving properly, the body will fill that joint up with swelling. This

swelling happens the most when you are not moving joint (this is because if you move a joint, some of the swelling is pumped out), and the time you are not moving for the longest period of time is at night when you are sleeping. This is the reason that you may wake up stiff and achy and by the time you get moving around and into the shower you are loosened up a bit more. Many times we have found that if we restore proper function to the joints, by realigning them and getting them moving better, the morning achiness is reduced or goes away entirely.

## Do You Suffer From Headaches?

*(YES)* Headaches can be a horrible thing to suffer from! According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) in Atlanta, Georgia, as many as 45 million Americans suffer from severe headaches. Sadly, the number of people being affected by severe headache pain continues to grow each year. There are many types of headaches, but one of the most common types is called a cervicogenic headache. This type of headache actually starts in the neck. When the bones of the neck get out of place it puts a tremendous amount of stress on the nerves, blood vessels, and even the brain. In response to this the body gives you a head ache to let you know that there is something wrong. It is a lot like the oil light in your car. When the oil light comes on in your car it is a warning that the oil is getting low. What do you do when you see this light? You change the oil of course. It is the same thing in the body, when you have a head ache you have to remove the reason for the headache, which many times is a misalignment of the bones of the neck from injury, poor posture, a traumatic birth, or even falls as a child! I have found that when you realign the bones of the spine a huge majority of the time the heads go away or are greatly reduced!

## Does your current job require you to spend long hours sitting or engaging in repetitive motions?

*(YES)* You are not alone! Most of Americans have jobs that keep us in a seated position for most of our days. The problem is that we are not made to sit for extended periods of time. When you sit, especially at the computer you are most likely putting your head, neck, mid back and low back in a very vulnerable position. The longer that you sit the more likely it is that you are creating dysfunction in the neck, mid back, and low back. This dysfunction could be fixations in the joints (the joints getting stuck) or even misalignment's of the bones and joints. These dysfunctions can lead to degeneration and even disturbances in your nervous system. If, at points during your day you feel the need to stretch your neck, or your shoulders are starting to feel "tight" it is important that you are examined by a chiropractor.

## Are you 50 years of age or older and suffering from multiple muscle/joint problems?

*(Yes)* Every day we are alive is a stressor to our bodies. As we grow older the joints and muscles in our bodies tend to weaken and become more vulnerable to these stressors. Proper alignment and movement in the joints is vitally important to weak muscle and joints. If any of the bones or joints are not in proper alignment or are not moving well this can create pain, stiffness,

weakness, and instability. It is especially important to the aging body to maintain proper joint function. If you are over the age of 50 and suffering from any joint or muscle problems you need to be seeing a chiropractor.

Have you suffered an injury (e.g. sprained ankle, pulled muscle, pulled disc, etc.) from which you are still feeling after-effects despite sufficient healing time, medication or other forms of therapy?

*(Yes)* This can be a common experience. When you injure an area of the body many things occur. There is what we call "soft tissue" injuries which is what a sprained ankle, or a muscle tear is. This part of the injury that can be very painful. Many times though this is not all that is wrong. Along with the soft tissue damage, the bones and joints can also be injured. In some cases the bones and joints can even become misaligned. This is very common in the neck (i.e.-whiplash injuries) and the low back (i.e.-lifting injuries). If there is any type of misalignment of the joints this will keep the area from healing completely. This is the reason why an injury can become a nagging injury that continues to give pain long after the time it should have healed. A chiropractor will analyze the injured area and determine if your injury caused any type of misalignment to the joints. If they find that it has then a gentle chiropractic adjustment will help realign the joints.

**If you found that you answered yes to any one of these tests or questions then you are a prime candidate to be evaluated for chiropractic care. If you are searching for a [Bellevue Chiropractor](#) then you will want to call the authors office to schedule a consultation to discuss your health concern. The author, Dr. Michael Weir is the premiere Proadjuster chiropractor in Bellevue and is well suited to address any of your spinal complaints. To schedule your consultation with Dr. Weir please call 425-635-0495.**