

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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Fractures and Chiropractic Care

Presented by:

Introduction

Bone fractures, or broken bones, are often caused by a forceful impact to or repetitive stress on one of your bones, and fractures can be debilitating, affecting your ability to perform your usual activities of daily living. Motor vehicle accidents, falls, and direct blows experienced during sports activities are among the leading causes of fractures, notes the University of Maryland Medical Center.¹ Repetitive activities and certain diseases or underlying health problems can also cause fractures. Fractures are particularly common among older individuals. According to 2004 study published in the journal *Bone*, hip, wrist, and upper humerus, or upper arm, fractures are the most common fracture types in both men and women over 55.²

Types of Fractures

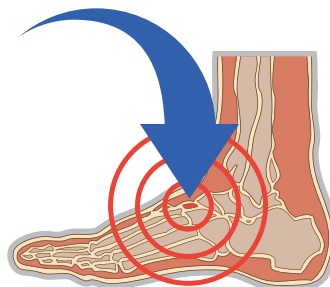
Fractures can be classified in several different ways, including by cause (traumatic vs. pathological) and anatomical location (i.e., the specific location in your body in which the fracture occurs). Pathologic fractures, unlike those fractures caused by trauma, require a deeper investigation to determine the true underlying cause of your break.

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Pathologic fractures are caused by diseases that weaken bone, such as osteoporosis, cancer, infection, and certain inherited bone disorders.

Fractures are also classified by how your bone breaks, and whether your broken bone pierces your skin. Injuries in which your broken bone pierces your skin are called compound fractures, whereas injuries that involve a fracture of your bone only (without piercing your skin or damaging nearby tissues) are called simple fractures. Fractures can be complete (bone fragments are completely separated), incomplete (bone fragments are still partially connected), comminuted (bone breaks into many pieces), spiral, oblique, linear, or transverse.

Compression fractures, which involve the collapse of a vertebra, most commonly occur in the lower thoracic and upper lumbar spines, and in postmenopausal women.



Exercise of the Week

Hamstring Curls Supine, Hips in Neutral Position

Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie on back, lower legs resting on ball, knees straight. Hands can rest on hips with elbows touching floor. Press down into ball with legs, lifting hips until entire body is in a straight position, feet to shoulders. Stabilize with stomach tucked in and hold.

Exercise: Roll ball toward buttocks using both feet. As ball comes closer to buttocks, hips should rise but not bend, keeping a straight line between knees, hips and shoulders. Curl legs to 90 degrees & hold for 2 counts. Return to starting position, maintaining a tight abdomen throughout. Repeat 5-10 times.



A 2004 article published in the journal *American Family Physician* states that vertebral compression fractures affect about 25 percent of postmenopausal American women. The authors also note that the prevalence of vertebral compression fractures in postmenopausal women increases with age, up to 40 percent in women who are 80 years of age.³ Vertebral compression factors are a serious problem affecting spine health in older men and women.

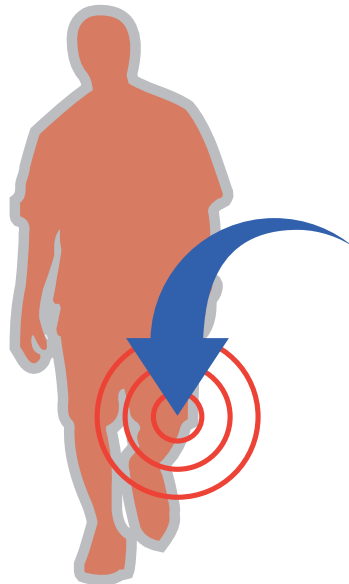
Signs and Symptoms

Fractures may cause extreme pain, swelling, and bruising in your affected area, and they may involve a visibly misshapen joint or body segment. A broken bone may cause numbness and tingling, and you may be unable to move your injured limb or body part. In some cases, a fracture may be difficult to distinguish from a dislocated bone, though both are true health emergencies and should be treated immediately by a qualified healthcare professional.

Re-establishing normal physical activity routines as soon as possible after a fracture heals is extremely important, especially in older adults who suffer a hip fracture. According to a study published in *American Journal of Public Health*, the general health of older individuals declines after hip fractures, so every effort should be made to regain full function to avoid health complications.⁴ Your chiropractor can recommend specific therapeutic exercises and activities that can accelerate your recovery and he or she can guide you toward a full and healthy return to your usual activities of daily living.

Chiropractic Treatment Approaches

Your chiropractor may use several gentle treatment methods to promote healing of your injured bone and other tissues during the immediate and long-term phases of your recovery. Specific treatment approaches differ between chiropractors, but a good general chiropractic approach to fracture care involves nutritional counseling, therapeutic taping procedures that help reduce swelling and bring nutrients to your damaged tissues, physical therapy modalities that help heal your injuries and simple exercises that you can perform as soon as possible after the removal of your splint or cast. Your doctor may also perform chiropractic adjustments or soft tissue work in other parts of your body to help you maintain good general joint mobility and promote a high level of health and well-being during your recovery.



Quote to Inspire

The goal of spiritual practice is full recovery, and the only thing you need to recover from is a fractured sense of self.
~ Marianne Williamson

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