

# The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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## How Chiropractic Supports Your Athletic Goals

Presented by:

### Introduction

An athlete is anybody who participates in sports or other kinds of physical activity. Most of us are athletes, then, in one form or another. Striving for athletic accomplishment - however you define it - is a great goal but striving for optimal health is an equally important aim. As an athlete, your body's health is crucial to your performance and your enjoyment of the athletic experience. According to a 2009 study published in the journal *Chiropractic & Osteopathy*, a chiropractor who uses multimodal treatments (including both active and passive therapies) may be most well-suited to managing your athletic condition and health needs.<sup>1</sup>

### Proper Spinal Alignment

Restoring proper spinal joint alignment and function is one important way that chiropractic care supports your athletic goals. A study published in the *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research* reports that a group of baseball players treated with upper cervical chiropractic care showed favorable changes in athletic performance (muscle strength and long jump performance) and physiological measures (increased blood capillary counts, decreased resting blood pressure and pulse rate) compared to a control group who received no chiropractic care.<sup>2</sup> In addition to improving your posture and musculoskeletal function, proper spinal alignment and

chiropractic care may help strengthen some of your other body systems - a big advantage for athletes.



### Pain Relief

Chiropractic is an effective treatment method for resolving acute or chronic musculoskeletal pain and countless athletes - from professionals to weekend warriors - use chiropractic care for this important purpose. Most athletes experience at least some pain or discomfort from time to time, due to trauma sustained during training or competition, repetitive strain injuries or inappropriate footwear. According to a 2010 article published in the journal *Current Sports Medicine Reports*, in the absence of serious spinal problems, or neurological deficits, spinal manipulative therapy may be one of the most effective treatment methods for short-term pain relief in active individuals with low back pain.<sup>3</sup>



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### Exercise of the Week

Lumbar stabilization (stage 3)  
Plank Position

Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your Chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise)

**Start:** Lie down on stomach. Then, begin by propping upper body up onto elbows/forearms, with hands together in prayer position. Engage inner abdominal muscles by bringing belly button inward. Keeping spine steady, lift hips and knees so you're resting on toes, creating a straight line from ankles to shoulders.

**Exercise:** Keeping spine steady, lift one leg 6-8 inches. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 1) If this is relatively easy, try bringing that leg horizontally out to side as far as you can, keeping torso steady. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 2) Switch legs, and repeat. Perform 3-5 sets of this exercise per side. Be careful not to strain lower back.





## Improved Circulation

Achieving optimal circulation, or blood flow, is something every athlete should strive for. Boosting blood flow throughout your body, especially to your injured areas, helps bring key nutrients to your damaged tissues and removes harmful metabolic byproducts from these areas. A 2007 study published in the *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research* notes that study participants who received a cervical adjustment experienced a temporary increase in blood flow through the middle cerebral artery for up to five minutes post-adjustment.<sup>4</sup> Other chiropractic techniques (especially soft tissue mobilization) and physical therapy modalities also improve circulation to key tissues and areas within your body.



## Lifestyle Counseling

Lifestyle counseling for athletes is an area where chiropractic really excels. A defining feature of sports medicine, notes a 2008 study published in the journal *Sociology of Health & Illness*, is an emphasis on performance, which is best achieved by a client-centered practice model - one of the key reasons why chiropractic is used by so many athletes.<sup>5</sup> The individualized care and attention you receive from your chiropractor, for all aspects of your health and performance, can give you a competitive edge, help you prevent injuries and help you lead as healthy a life as possible outside your competitive venue.

Your chiropractor is a healthcare professional with a deep understanding of sports nutrition and how hydration, sleep and the environment affect your performance and your ability to recover between competitive bouts. The nutritional advice your chiropractor may impart takes into consideration several factors that are relevant to you, the athlete, including the type and quantity of food and fluid you consume, when you consume food and fluid, what nutritional supplements may be most helpful for you and how your specific sport or activity influences your body's metabolic demands.

Your chiropractor may also offer you training advice that includes strategies on how to optimize your longevity in your sport or activity. Ask your chiropractor about specific training errors to avoid and how to maximize your sports performance while maintaining optimal health.

## Quote to Inspire

*“As an athlete, as a competitor, you have to have that belief in yourself.”*

*Tiger Woods*

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4. Scott RM, Kaufman CL, Dengel DR. The impact of chiropractic adjustments on intracranial blood flow: a pilot study. *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research*. 2007. May; (21): 1-8.
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