

Neighborhood Healthcare: Spinal Treatment

by James G. Halvorson, DC, DACAN

ACUTE CARE: If you have a sudden onset of pain, suspect **SWELLING** and do the following to decrease inflammation and pain:

- **ICE**—apply ice to the painful area for 10-15 minutes (every hour if needed).
- **EXERCISE**—stay active if you can. Mild, gentle range-of-motion exercises help pump out inflammatory fluid. Early active exercise can also inhibit the formation of scar tissue. Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain.
- **ANTI-INFLAMMATORY Nutritional Measures:**—to reduce swelling—try natural anti-inflammatories (fish oils, Turmeric,).
- **SPINAL MANIPULATION**—Spinal manipulation restores motion to the joint and the subsequent pumping effect can help reduce swelling and pain.

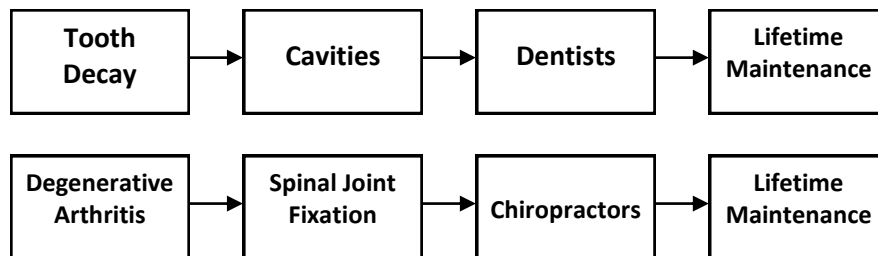
POST-ACUTE CARE: Do this even when you don't have symptoms—it is like **"BRUSHING and FLOSSING"** your teeth.

- **EXERCISE:** Daily—walking, hiking, swimming, bicycling, dancing, yoga—try to get out and move 30-60 minutes every day.
- **STRETCHING:** Daily—periodically throughout the day. Good for the muscles and the joints.
- **PRESSURE POINT THERAPY or MYOFASCIAL RELEASE:** Daily—take breaks throughout the day to massage your trouble spots.
- **NUTRITION:** Eat foods that decrease inflammation and avoid foods that promote inflammation—anti-inflammatory diet.
- **HEAT:** Can be done on a daily basis—it is wonderful therapy for tight, achy muscles.
- **PROPER POSTURE and BODY MECHANICS:** for various activities of daily living (ADLs)—including sitting, bending, and lifting.
- **CORE STRENGTHENING:** 3-4 times a week. This is essential because of the inherent weakness of the scar tissue.
- **SPINAL MANIPULATION:** Can help prevent exacerbations of pain and keep the spine functioning optimally.

MAINTENANCE CARE: This is like brushing and flossing your teeth. Do this even if you don't have symptoms.

- **DAILY:** stretching, pressure point therapy (using tennis balls or soft balls), maintaining good postures (especially with bending and lifting), reducing stress in your life, walking for at least 30 minutes, eating foods that are anti-inflammatory and maintaining a healthy weight.
- **3X/WEEK:** strengthening exercises and core stabilization.
- **MONTHLY:** go to your chiropractor and get checked and treated for spinal joint dysfunction/fixation. Also, a deep tissue massage would be beneficial. Manipulation and massage once a month can help prevent exacerbations of pain and keep the spine functioning optimally.

MAINTENANCE PHILOSOPHY: We should take care of our spines the way we take care of our teeth. Because there is no "cure" for tooth decay, we have implemented a lifetime maintenance strategy that focuses on the prevention of cavity formation. We start brushing and flossing at an early age and we go to our dentists regularly for check-ups. We take care of our teeth in the absence of pain and we do this for a lifetime. Likewise, there is no "cure" for the degenerating spine. A lifetime maintenance strategy that focuses on the prevention and treatment of dysfunction and fixation should be implemented, even when we don't have symptoms.



Neighborhood Healthcare: Spinal Exercises

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STRETCHING: DAILY—Hold the stretches for 10-15 seconds at a time. Always stretch both sides.



Neck Stretches



Side Stretch



Kneeling Lunge Stretch (for the hip flexors)



Piriformis Stretch Seated in a chair

CORE STRENGTHENING and STABILIZATION EXERCISES: AT LEAST 3X/WEEK



Bridge



Bird Dog



Sitting and Rolling on Gym Ball



Side Plank with Gym Ball



Donkey Kicks

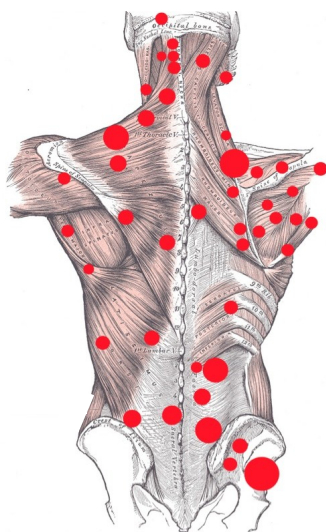


Bridge with a Gym Ball



One Legged Bridge with Gym Ball

PRESSURE POINT THERAPY (Myofascial Release): Myofascial trigger points are hyperirritable spots in the fascia surrounding skeletal muscle. They are associated with palpable nodules in taut bands of muscle fibers. One of the best ways to treat them is with massage or pressure. Lie on or lean back against tennis balls, softballs or baseballs (putting them into a long sock will help hold them together and allow you to reach all areas of the spine).



Common Trigger Points



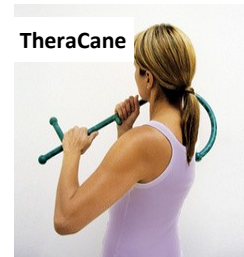
Tennis Ball



Softball or baseball if you like more pressure



Omni Massage Rollers



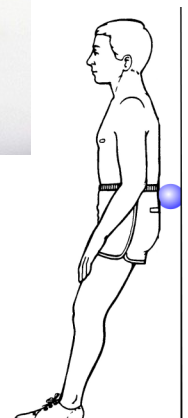
TheraCane



Styrofoam roller on Piriformis



Stick Massager



Use the ball up against the wall