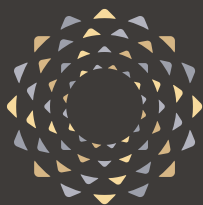


Better Results
Faster



VITAL LIFE
CHIROPRACTIC

Thank you for taking the time to empower yourself to make lasting changes to your health and ultimately life. We put together some of our best tips to help you along your journey. We truly appreciate the opportunity to come alongside you and equip you to get the best results possible. It is an honor and we do not take it lightly.

We take pride in getting great results.

In order for you to achieve the results you desire, we have to agree this is a partnership. We will deliver specific adjustments and provide you with the appropriate corrective exercises. It is your responsibility to show up to your appointments, do your corrective exercises, and to break your bad habits that have been perpetuating your subluxation pattern. We have included the most common repetitive motions, activities, positions, postures etc. that could inhibit your progress and promote your subluxation pattern. We have also added some stress reduction techniques as well as a few eating tips to support you. Please try to identify your bad habits so you can modify or stop them. Your future self will thank you for it!

Types of Stress

Physical • Chemical • Emotional

There are 3 main types of stress that are prevalent in society today: Physical, Chemical and Emotional. We are seeing health declining at more and more significant rates than ever before due to these unnatural stresses that have become part of our daily lives. Use this book as a resource to identify some of yours and make the necessary changes. Regular adjustments in rhythm, breaking your bad habits, and adding in some positive lifestyle changes will help your body adapt to these stressors and start creating health.

The Physical Aspects of Stress

Unfortunately, many jobs require people to sit the majority of the day. This has led to the epidemic of “**Sitting Disease**”. Sitting has been labeled the “New Smoking” because of the detrimental affects it has on our health. In fact, we see so many people struggle to achieve their goals due to the unnatural posture of sitting in chairs improperly. If you are forced to sit, try modifying your work-station with our examples below as well as maintaining an engaged core with an upright lumbar spine.

Select a **desk** that will allow you to vary from a sitting to standing position. This daily change in posture will be beneficial to your spine when there is extended periods of desk work. When you are in a standing position, it is much easier to maintain an upright posture, however, prolonged standing without movement can create some stress on the feet, knees, SI joint, and lower spine.

Chair that requires you to sit straight up for maximum comfort,

wobble chair, yoga ball or a roller chair with a built in ball are great options.

Ear over shoulder, shoulders back, and engage the core.

Using a **book holder** will force you to keep a more neutral spine or “head over shoulder posture”. You can use these for cookbooks, regular reading, music stands, etc! These devices are extremely useful and will only cost between \$10-\$30. The bonus is that using this device should increase your efficiency and productivity as well! Another great option is reading on your belly while propped up on your elbows for some cervical curve enhancement.

Sports & Chores

Always practice on both sides, especially with activities such as golf, vacuuming and shoveling.

Backpacks

Always carry backpacks on two shoulders, and high on the back. If carrying a one-shouldered purse, wear bag on both sides. Keep backpacks “high and tight” with the heaviest material closest to the body.

Sleeping Positions



"The BIG idea when it comes to sleep is to be comfortable, get restful sleep, and to keep your spine as neutral as possible!"

This is a controversial topic, especially with breathing and sleep apnea specialists. At Vital Life we advocate sleeping on your back or your side (when considering spinal health). These are the easiest positions to maintain neutral posture. Sleeping on your stomach causes massive rotation in your neck, which can result in breathing issues (among other problems). To be in this position for hours will take a toll on your neck, especially if you already have subluxation in your cervical spine. Sleeping on your back with a thin pillow under your head and a thick pillow under your knees, on a firm mattress would be ideal.

If you are a side sleeper, you need a pillow that fills in the gap between your shoulder and your head, keeping your head in a neutral/straight position with the rest of your spine. This means you need a thicker pillow and one that is preferably contoured to fit around the shoulder.

When it comes to bedding, we always recommend organic. We spend nearly 1/3 of our lives on our mattress. Obviously, it is not healthy to be breathing in harmful materials and chemicals placed on pillows or mattresses, such as fire retardants or off-gassing substances from memory foams that break down. Whether you are a side sleeper or back sleeper you want your pillow to maintain a neutral spine ie. not pushing your head up to high or too low. This depends a lot on your mattress firmness, pillow type and sleeping position. The BIG idea when it comes to sleep is to be comfortable, get restful sleep, and to keep your spine as neutral as possible!

Phone Calls

If you have a job that requires you to talk on the phone frequently, consider getting a headset. The majority of individuals have a dominant ear that they hold a phone up to. This creates a repetitive pattern of bending the neck to one side. If you are someone that pins the phone between your shoulder and ear, this is another bad habit to break immediately!

Tech Neck

One of the major contributors to neck pain is cell phones and other handheld devices. When we hold our head in a flexed forward position while looking down at our phone, it greatly increases the demand of the lower cervical spine and the supportive musculature. This “bad habit” has now earned its’ own diagnosis with lasting health effects: TECH NECK! This is a degenerative change in the neck caused by the micro-trauma of looking down all the time.

For every inch of forward head posture, we increase the stress and strain on the neck by 10-20 pounds! Obviously, this can cause neck pain, upper back pain, shoulder pain, and is going to set you up for reoccurring subluxation patterns and accelerated degeneration.

When someone severely flexes the neck like you see with most children and teenagers while on their phone or playing handheld video games, this 12 pound head now is placing about 60 pounds of force on the neck!

“This is a degenerative change in the neck caused by the micro-trauma of looking down all the time.”

Posture

Always be conscious of posture. Your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles should all make a straight line. Avoid stooping over and slouching forward. This part of our health is often the most overlooked aspect of health. Abnormal postural deviations are going to be one of the most significant challenges of our current generation. A majority of our patients have postural deviations that either started or are a huge contributing factor to their health challenges/ complaints. Research has shown that for every 1 inch forward head posture can add 8 pounds of pressure to the neck. As the head translates forward, the chest cavity is also decreased causing the heart and lungs to work harder in a lot of cases.

Proper Lifting Technique

Head should always remain upright and maintain a neutral spine. Bend at hips and knees, avoid using lower back to lift.

Driving

When driving the proper position would be one that allows you to look straight ahead with your elbows at 90 degrees (hands on the steering wheel at 4 and 8), and the spine straight up and down forming a 90 degree angle at the waist.

Try to position your headrest so that it still supports your head if you get in an accident but does not chronically push your head forward. If you are a female and wear a ponytail, throw your hair down when you get in the car so it does not push your head forward. Once you have your seat set and

you are in an ergonomically correct spinal position, set your mirror. Now every time you slouch or lose your posture you will no longer be able to see out of your mirror, this is your cue to SIT UP! If you are on a long trip and find that you cannot maintain the posture, then it is time to get out and walk around. We recommend using an affordable lumbar support product in your vehicle for any commute over 10 minutes even if the vehicle has one. They can be found online for between \$10-\$20 in most cases. These work in a tractor as well during haying season.



The Mental Aspects of Stress

Stress is here to stay. In fact, it feels like life is getting more stressful each year. We have life stress, work stress, spouse stress, money stress, social media stress just to name a few. Here are some of our favorite tips to help create new thought patterns and routines to help you not only survive stress but learn to thrive through it. Like any new thing it takes 21 days to start to create a habit, so make sure you commit to at least 3 weeks of whatever you choose before you decide if it works or not.

Affirmations

Pick 2-5 positive things you love and say them out loud in front of the mirror each day. Some of our favorite examples include: I am HEALTHY! I am HAPPY! I am LOVED! They can be as short or as long as you would like, the key is to say them out loud and believe them.

“Like any new thing it takes 21 days to start to create a habit, so make sure you commit to at least 3 weeks of whatever you choose before you decide if it works or not.”

Meditation

Meditation is one of our favorite mindfulness practices. The key to it is creating a little space in your day to consciously quiet your mind for a few minutes. It doesn't have to be anything extreme but can be as simple as a few minutes of just breathing. If you want help and need guidance there are quite a few apps available for you: *Headspace* and *Calm* are some of the main ones.

Prayer

One of our favorite verses is Philippians 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” We have adopted the habit of praying over our day, our families, and each patient we get the chance to interact with and we can say without a doubt our lives have been enriched due to this simple yet profound act.

Journaling

Journaling is a fantastic way to gather your thoughts and create some clarity. *Gratitude Journals* are readily available for purchase. We like to journal each day and write 5 things we are grateful for in our life as well as one thing we did really well that day. As soon as you start focusing on the positive things in life, you realize there are a lot more of them out there. Make this your own and tweak it as you please.

Planning

Planning your weeks and months are one of the best things you can do for yourself and your family. We get it can also be one of the hardest things to do as who has the time right? Taking a few minutes each week to get a plan ready and know what to expect will actually create more freedom in your life. An example is meal planning or prepping, you spend a few minutes getting everything ready for the week and it makes weeknight meals faster, more affordable, and usually healthier.

Self Care

This is so important in today's fast paced lifestyles. This looks so different to everyone and as we have learned in practice over the last few years it's often the most neglected part of our lives. You have to make some time for YOU. You show up better for everyone who counts on you. Figure out what makes you smile or inspires you and add more of that to your life. You absolutely can not fill from an empty cup and the world around you and you yourself deserve the best you!

Social Media/News

This goes without saying, but cut your time on each by 50%! Research has shown that they create a stress response in your body and all social media programs are designed for their usage to become a habit. Not only will you be in a better mood you will also have a ton more time!

*We know who has time for all of that? We have been there ourselves. Once this is down it can be done in as little as 10 minutes a day. We highly recommend the following books:
The Miracle Morning, The 5 am Club, The Energy Bus,
The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari.*

The Chemical Aspects of Stress

There is a ton of information on eating and diet types out there where it can be so confusing we don't even know where to start. It doesn't have to be that hard. Start adding in whole real foods and start slowly eliminating the things you know are not healthy. We strongly urge people to eliminate as much refined sugar as possible. It is linked to all sorts of chronic conditions. Below are a few links we suggest to get an idea of where to start.

Dr Axe Website

<https://draxe.com/nutrition-category/diets/>

This link will take you to an overview of different types of diets and some pros and cons of each one. We recommend finding one that resonates with you and sticking with it at least 80% for 6 months. Explore the rest of the website as it is free and full of info

Bonfire Health

<https://bonfirehealth.com/>

This is a great free resource that has health articles, recipes and tips. Sign up for the newsletters as well. We know that knowledge helps empower you to make the best decisions for yours and your families health and the information listed here will do just that!

"It doesn't have to be that hard."



Dr.'s Tips

Dr. Zak Alfstad

Dr. Zak had originally aspired to attend medical school, but after being poisoned by a prescription acne medication he knew that he did not want to be a part of possibly causing someone else that pain. He knew upon entering chiropractic school that he had chosen the right path.

- Keep your adjustment rhythm
- Take frequent walking breaks if desk-bound
- Replace chair with an exercise ball or a standing desk
- Start and keep a regular fitness program
- Do daily spinal hygiene and corrective exercises (we will give you these)
- Set mirrors in your car so you can only see out of them with perfect posture. When you cannot see out of your mirrors anymore, you know it's time to sit up straight.
- Pick a physical hobby that requires you to be outside moving
- If wearing a tool belt, switch to a tool harness
- Don't pack backpacks with more than 10% of body weight and keep the heavy items closest to the body, cinch the bag up so that the bottom of the pack does not go past the top of your bottom
- Limit all tech time including TV, tablets, video games, movies, computer time and cell phones
- Maintain a positive mental outlook
- Eat more whole, real foods than the bad stuff.
- Drink enough clean water