



Chirothots

By Tim Wood, D.C.

What Do You Do About Pain?



The past few weeks we have talked about how to deal with certain health issues in an “Inside Out” way that works with your body’s ability to heal from above, down, inside out. Pain is a symptom all of us will have at some times in our life. Most people deal with all pain the same way; they find something to dull the pain and remove the symptom. Is pain the problem? NO, it is NEVER the problem. It is a signal from your body. It NEVER makes sense to shut off a signal without first looking deeper to realize WHY your body is creating that signal and what it is trying to tell you. Some of you are thinking, DUH that is why we are here! Using a painkiller (natural or medical) without looking deeper into it would be like the **oil warning light in your car turning on and you decide to cut the wire to the oil light and keep driving**. Painkillers stop your brain from creating the signal of pain just like cutting the wire to the oil light would stop your car from signaling that there is a problem. You could keep driving pretending like nothing is wrong until your engine seizes costing \$5000-10 000 dollars. Shutting off symptoms like pain ALWAYS ends up in a similar disaster as well. Your body can’t signal the problem so it remains unresolved and causes more damage as it goes deeper and deeper effecting function and health more. Many different issues result in a pain, this week I will discuss two types of pain:

1-“Healing Pain” - Sometimes pain is a symptom of a process of healing but not necessarily a problem. If you stress or impact an area of your body beyond its normal ability to cope pain can be the result as your body heals and repairs. We have all done this! If you work out in a different way it causes subtle damage to muscles which your body repairs and makes the muscle stronger to handle the stress next time. This pain is your body’s way of stopping you from doing activities that put stress through the area it is healing. Going for a longer walk or run than normal may result in some “healthy” muscle pain, or if you are more fit it may take a hard plyometrics or boot camp workout to create that healthy pain. This healing muscle pain will always occur within 24 hours and typically be gone by 72 hours. Your stressor might be gardening, exercise, holding weird posture for a long period of time, etc... You should just **drink lots of water, take double your fish oil, ice any area of acute pain for 10 minutes at a time, and let your body heal!** If you had direct trauma, use arnica cream to help reduce bruising. If you have healthy pain from an area other than muscle, such as a joint, or tendon from impact, or awkward sleeping, etc. the same principles apply but it may get worse for up to a week after the initial stress but after the first week it should consistently get better day after day. It may take up to 4-8 weeks for an area to heal from an uncomplicated stress / injury. Again there is not an issue with this type of “healthy” pain and you should do the same things I described above and get adjusted. **Adjustments will not “relieve” the pain but will ensure your body is healing the problem as fast as possible so the pain gets better as fast as possible.**

2-Problematic Pain? Pain is never “unhealthy” but it is a problem when:

1-the same pain happens again and again

2-the problem doesn’t heal to the level of function it was at before because healing stops or plateaus

These are signs of a problem limiting your body’s ability to heal. Usually that problem is nerve pressure but if it isn’t I would refer you out to the right person to help! Getting adjusted is crucial for problematic pain to make sure the nerves going to the area of damage are working at 100%. Nerves connect our body parts to our brain, which is what heals us, so nerves must work properly in order for damage to heal fully. If you are under regular care and come in with a pain one day I will deal with it very differently than a new patient with the same pain because I know your nervous system is doing well from the care you had before the injury so we support the healing but I expect it to heal optimally without us changing anything. **Don’t get frustrated with me for trusting your body’s ability to heal!** If you are not under care and you come in with an old injury that hasn’t healed and is causing pain then there is a lot of work to do to deal with the layers of compensation and damage that have occurred because your nervous system was not working well enough to heal the injury in the first place. So the same trauma and injury can have totally different results in someone who is not under chiropractic care when compared to someone who is. I see this all the time after sports traumas and car accidents where patients under wellness care heal incredibly well and quickly compared to the “average” person not under care. Areas of long term damage and pain will improve over time under regular chiropractic care but it can take a long time and some areas may not heal to 100%. The focus is improving your ability to heal from the inside out with regular adjustments, regular exercise, and a low-inflammatory whole food diet. **Stay tuned for our 40 Day Lifestyle Challenge in January to kick this up a notch!**

When will my pain go away? When pain is chronic, always there, and not being touched by what you are doing it can indicate many things as well. Some of these people get relief really quickly through chiropractic care, while some of these people with the same pain may not get relief for months. The injury is usually very deep, involving many layers (like an onion) and how quickly symptoms change depends on what “layer” of the problem is the one your body is alerting you about with the pain. If it is an outer layer it will heal really quickly in the process of healing so you feel better right away. If it is a deeper layer causing the pain it requires patience as your body heals layer by layer to get at the deeper layers. Then and only then will you feel better. I am sorry to say no one can tell what “layer” is responsible for symptoms. It is important to respect the fact that **healing ALL layers of the problem MUST be the goal if you want that problem to heal fully and not affect your health in the future.** If the problem is still there, such as degeneration, it will just get worse and cause symptoms again later. I suggest accepting that relief may take time, but stay focused on helping the problem heal as quickly as possible. When you started care I gave you a sheet with basic lifestyle changes to help speed up healing so relief comes as quick as possible. **Ask for a copy** if you never read it! What you eat and drink can affect pain a lot! Most of health care just wants you to feel better so they would just work down to the layer of symptoms and leave it from there. Our goal is different and I can only be confident in predicting a better and longer life for you if you choose to help your body heal problems, not symptoms, from above, down, inside, out! **Adjustments are to help you HEAL better, not just feel better.**

Nutrition can help your pain improve quicker and your body heal quicker. What you eat is never what caused the problem leading to pain but it can affect how much pain is caused by the problem. It comes down mainly to inflammation and some hormones that are used by your brain to create pain. Women notice more pain during their period, mainly because of an increase in the hormones that

are also used to make pain so a slightly achey joint becomes more intense for that few days. The main way to use nutrition to reduce symptoms while you are correcting the cause of the problem is to reduce your body's inflammatory state. This is done by reducing omega 6 fats and increasing omega 3 fats. This also reduces risk of heart disease and certain cancers and other health concerns so it is good all around! Avoid ALL vegetable oils and use coconut oil or olive oil at low temperature. Take 1 tbsp of Omega Sufficiency fish oil daily (available at our office). Eat lots of antioxidants like berries and green vegetables and avoid eating grain fed or finished beef, white flour, dairy and sugar. Avoiding alcohol is also best for reducing pain. These steps are a good start to reducing your inflammatory state but much more thorough steps can be taken, look online for anti-inflammatory diets or join us for our advanced workshops.