

The Olympic Advantage: Chiropractors

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July 23, 2012 – If you are a spectator going to the Olympics make sure you bring your tickets, your binoculars, and your MasterCard. But if you are a world class athlete all you may need is your chiropractor.

For years chiropractors have been working with world class athletes; and why not? Chiropractors are experts in human function.

One of the best known chiropractors in the Olympics is Dr. Terry Schroeder. Dr. Schroeder was named the head coach of the U.S. water polo team, which became one of the top stories of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. They won the silver medal. His U.S. squad entered the Olympics ranked ninth in the world and defeated Serbia in the semifinals before falling to Hungary in the gold-medal game.

Dr. Schroeder's players receive regular chiropractic care to improve their long-term health and also to maximize their performance at the Olympic Games. The action for the 2012 water polo Team starts on July 29 when the U.S. Men take on Montenegro. Then on July 30 the U.S. Women meet Hungary. This Olympic year promises to be one of the best for Dr. Schroeder's team. For more information on the USA Olympic water polo team, go to [USA Water Polo](#).

The drugless, unfair advantage

A newer development of chiropractic is pushing the limits of athletic possibilities. Around the world today many chiropractors are learning Functional Neurology. This is a complex program of study that requires hundreds of hours of academic and clinical training of the human nervous system and is taught by the [Carrick Institute for Graduate Studies](#).

A functional chiropractic neurologist provides diagnosis and treatment of a variety of conditions and uses therapies and applications that do not include drugs or surgery. A functional neurologist provides successful outcomes for movement disorders, dystonia, post-stroke rehabilitation, and radiculopathy or nerve entrapment syndromes that are consequences of peripheral or central types of lesions. Specifically to the athlete, a functional neurologist will use physical and neurological tests and treatments to provide stability and orientation in space, improve motor movements and sensory acuity, all of which are highly defined in world-class athletes.

What kind of athlete wouldn't want that?

One group of athletes often overlooked in the Olympics is the Paralympics; athletes who have sustained permanent injuries but still have a strong athletic ability. Some paralympians receive chiropractic care to enhance their performance, overcome injuries faster and help their bodies stabilize and adapt to an altered body function. Dr. Steven Roffers, a chiropractor who practices functional neurology in North Atlanta, Georgia, has worked with the USA Paralympic Team at the training center in Colorado and other places throughout the country. For more information go to [Paralympians](#).

There is probably no group of athletes who stretch the brain and body like the gymnast.

McKayla Maroney, the 2011 World Vault Champion, was injured in St. Louis, Missouri on June 8, 2012, during a pre-meet warm up during her floor routine. She did three flips in the air, landed on

her back, and hit her head so hard that her nasal bone fractured and she was left with a severe concussion.

Because this injury was of this magnitude she had to meet with the Olympic medical board to assess her ability to compete at the national team Olympic trials.

Her primary treating chiropractor, Dr. Chris Tunner, was aware that she was still suffering from residual post-concussion symptoms and wanted to offer young McKayla her lifetime dream to compete in the Olympics, so after discussing the options with her mother they referred her to Dr. Shad Groves, a chiropractic neurologist, in Long Beach, California.

She came into Dr. Groves' office with her mother on Monday, the day before her medical eligibility examination. Dr. Groves was able to assess McKayla using functional neurology examination procedures and found equilibrium imbalances, eye tracking imbalances and nystagmus, and muscle weakness in her arm. After he gathered this information he performed specific neurological procedures using arm movements, eye re-patterning exercises, video-based opto kinetics, and head movements as treatment and therapy.

The next day, Tuesday June 19, 2012, McKayla was evaluated by the Olympic medical board to assess her post-concussive state and determine if she would attend the Olympic trials in San Jose, California. During this evaluation McKayla not only showed normal improvements in her strength, but she did not show any eye tracking problems and had completely restored the balance in her vestibular system.

But even better, she was given specific exercises based upon her neurological evaluation to perform as on-going therapy provided by Dr. Groves. She is now one of five on the U.S. Olympic team representing the United States in London.

The popularity of chiropractic has grown around the world. Every athlete is looking for an edge and they are finding that chiropractic offers a hands-on, drug-free advantage. Athletes are finely tuned humans and when one seemingly insignificant part of their physiology is not performing correctly they lose function; adding time or shortening distances to their event.

What is the difference between you and a world class Olympic athlete? You are an athlete whether you admit to it or not. You are meant to move freely and function without interference. You may find yourself functioning less than you once did. For that reason, advanced chiropractic programs are developing new ways to:

- Reduce motor reaction times
- Increase stability of the body
- Increase coordination of movements
- Increase oxygen transportation and usage
- Reduce bio mechanical joint position errors
- Performing person-specific neurological exercise regimes
- Provide a lifetime of physiological and neurologic care

As you watch the London Olympics notice how these world-class athletes use their bodies whether they are on land, in the water, or flying through the air. Every movement, every breath, and every system of their body is working in synchronized coordination to propel themselves through space. Notice how similar or dissimilar you are to them. It's all about degrees of performance.

Let the games begin.