**Training tips/health snippets**

**The Importance of Chiropractic in Sport**

A study in 1991, published in the journal of Chiropractic Research and Clinical Investigation, revealed that Chiropractic care can increase athletic performance by as much as 16.7% over two weeks. Another study published in the Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research in 1997 revealed that Chiropractic care increases your capillary count, meaning increased blood flow. The benefits of increased blood flow are substantial for any athlete.

**What is Chiropractic?**

Chiropractic is a [complementary and alternative medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complementary_and_alternative_medicine) [health care profession](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_care_profession) that is concerned with the neuromusculoskeletal system. In other words, Chiropractic focuses on [diagnosis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diagnosis), [treatment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treatment) and prevention of bio[mechanical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanical) disorders of the [musculoskeletal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musculoskeletal) system and the effects of these disorders on the functions of the [nervous system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nervous_system) and general health. It emphasizes [manual therapy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manual_therapy) including [spinal adjustment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinal_adjustment) and other joint and [soft-tissue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft-tissue) therapies.

Chiropractic is focused on treating the **cause** of a medical condition and not only the **symptoms**. It should thus be clear that Chiropractic treats holistically and it is therefore very important in the maintenance of normal health and prevention of ‘disease’.

**So how can a Chiropractor help my sport performance?**

Traditionally, it is based on the premise that a [vertebral subluxation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertebral_subluxation) or [spinal joint](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertebral_column) dysfunction can interfere with the nervous system and result in many different conditions of diminished performance. By restoring an athlete’s normal biomechanics, injuries such as hamstring tears can be greatly reduced. By restoring normal biomechanics and body function, the body can also perform at its optimal levels for peak performance.

As no sport is symmetrical in nature and puts the body under continuous stress, it is almost impossible to prevent joint dysfunction. Running rotates the pelvis in opposite directions with every stride, where cycling with its aerodynamic position reverses the spinal curves and therefore puts the spine under tremendous stress. The same can be said for swimming, where one arm is constantly stretched out in front of the body and the other pushing to the extreme at the back, with breathing only occurring to one side of the body at a time, again showing that this can put strain on the neck and back.

The spine is made up of 24 individual moveable vertebrae which are connected with ligaments and muscle, making the spine a dynamic chain, where malfunction at one level will have an impact on all other levels. If movement in any one of the joints is altered in any way, adjacent joints need to compensate.

This compensation will cause irritation of the muscle as well as the nervous system. Muscle will go into spasm to try and stabilize hyper mobile levels; this will increase the risk of muscle strains and tears.

As there are nerves that leave the spine at every level, malfunction will irritate the nerves and therefore alter sensory input as well as motor output at that level. With a decreased motor output, muscles as well as organs cannot perform optimally and the athlete will not be able to perform to his or her ability.

Chiropractic treats each athlete on an individual bases. A treatment protocol is developed which includes spinal adjustment, soft tissue therapy, prescription of exercises, and health and lifestyle counseling.

Every athlete needs to see a Chiropractor, as this will increase performance. Chiropractic is necessary not only in the treatment of injuries, but also in the prevention of injuries.

It all comes down to this: When your body is in a better alignment, the nervous system will be finely tuned and all pistons will be firing optimally, giving you, the athlete, the edge to perform at your best.