

Evidence-based Care for Low Back Pain:



Integrating Active Care and Spinal Manipulation Improves Patient Outcomes

ChiroCare prepares network providers for the evolving health care environment by providing them with the tools and information needed to successfully integrate spinal manipulation and active care. Current research validates that spinal manipulation with active care exercise provides the best long-term patient recovery outcomes.

Defining Low-back Pain

Non-specific low back pain accounts for up to 90 percent of all back pain patients. These patients are ideal candidates for active care instruction with spinal manipulation therapy. Patients with more serious conditions (e.g., red flags, nerve root compression) make up a relatively small minority.

Defining Spinal Manipulative Therapy

Spinal manipulative therapy is a form of manual treatment to influence joint and neurophysiological function. It involves a non-invasive diagnosis and hands-on therapy to restore spinal function and mobility.

Defining Active Care

Active care involves training motor control patterns that protect the spine. The training begins with step-by-step instruction to improve stability and neuromuscular control, progresses to stabilization exercises, and concludes with active conditioning. Biomechanical, neurophysiological, psychosocial and biochemical rationales exist for the benefits of active care at each phase of back pain, whether acute or chronic.

Key elements of active care include:

- Reassuring the patient it is safe and beneficial to gradually resume activity.
- Engaging the patient so they share responsibility for their recovery.
- Modifying advice to reduce exposure to repetitive strain.
- Educating about the long-term benefits of active care in reducing the risk of chronicity.
- Assisting patients in achieving their goals for restored function.

Health care in the United States is rapidly changing, especially as it relates to patient care. The new model no longer focuses on pathology or symptomatology. Pain is being used less as an indicator of patient recovery. Passive care alone is no longer enough. Studies are confirming active care is an emerging best practice for practitioners, and engaging patients to take ownership for their own treatment leads to better outcomes.

Chiropractic doctors focus on biomechanical function and stabilization which integrates well with active care and adheres to biomechanical principles by improving core strength and spine stabilization. Reducing spinal instability improves patient coping skills and increases motivation to resume activities. Studies over the past several years show that active care is helpful in returning a patient to pre-morbid functional capacity.

Chiropractic treatment works well in combination with active care and often is useful in removing barriers to activities. Simply click on the study title (below) for more information.

- > [**We Need to Rethink Front Line Care for Back Pain.**](#) This work recognizes the role of chiropractic in addressing musculoskeletal problems and the importance of adjusting patient beliefs and expectations to achieve goals. It also focuses on offering exercise and manual therapy as a method to reduce patient suffering, disability and work loss.
- > [**Low Back Pain.**](#) Here we learn about spinal manipulation recommendations for non-specific low back pain and a rapid return to normal activities with exercises to help prevent recurrences and treat chronic pain.
- > [**An Updated Overview of Clinical Guidelines for the Management of Non-specific Low Back Pain in Primary Care.**](#) Guidelines consistently contain treatment features for acute low back pain of early and gradual activation of patients and the discouragement of prescribed bed rest.
- > [**Chiropractic and Exercise for Seniors with Low Back Pain or Neck Pain: the Design of Two Randomized Clinical Trials.**](#) This study discusses the best treatments for low back pain and associated strength and motion to enhance function and improve quality of life.

Rest vs. Active Care

A comparison of patient progress using rest vs. active care shows the following:

Rest	Active Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slower healing, as inactivity slows imbibition or diffusion of nutrients and fluids in a disc, therefore limiting repair. Pain and tissue healing are affected by metabolism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of bone density and muscle strength.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demineralization of bone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved disc and cartilage nutrition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decreased physical fitness with a daily loss of muscle tone estimated at greater than one percent per day of inactivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved joint stability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased psychological stress, depression and increased difficulty in starting a rehab program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoidance of psychological issues.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less apt to develop chronic pain.

How ChiroCare Promotes Active Care

The ChiroCare Active Care Certification Program is a [four-part series](#) comprised of online and classroom instruction. Active Care Certification emphasizes the current state of evidence regarding the use of active care programs in chiropractic practice.

Following program certification, providers are eligible to receive a complimentary premium account subscription to the [Perfect Fit System](#). This online exercise delivery solution provides exercise animations and workout codes to create a unique exercise experience for each patient. Exercises can be printed, e-mailed, or sent to a smart phone.