

# STRESS

When you go to a music concert, or watch the footy finals live, or have a picnic with loved ones, do you enjoy it for the event, or because you value the experience and time spent with people close to you?

If you fall ill, or simply feel 'not at your best', do you think of what it means to be well again? Do you place value on the results of taking action to improve your health and well being? This doesn't just mean 'I want to be healthy', but the personal value you place in being healthy, or pain free. This might mean being able to play a musical instrument whenever you want, or to kick a ball with friends or family, or that being healthy means you can earn more money so you can take more holidays.



It's identifying the personal value of something that forms the basis for the information to follow. Without value, we set in motion a long string of events that we often describe as living the 'Rat Race'. The goal here is to illustrate how having a lifestyle with the wrong mix of activity and stimulation leads to pain, illness, & disease. The essence of this is to show how chiropractic plays an essential role in stimulating your body to function better.

### ARE YOU STRESSED?

I think most people would say yes, and even if you're not sure, it's the root cause of many ailments that you may suffer during life. Through this article I need to refer to two terms related to being stressed. The first is "Sympathetics" – a part of the nervous system that is over active when we're emotionally stressed. It's the fight or flight syndrome.



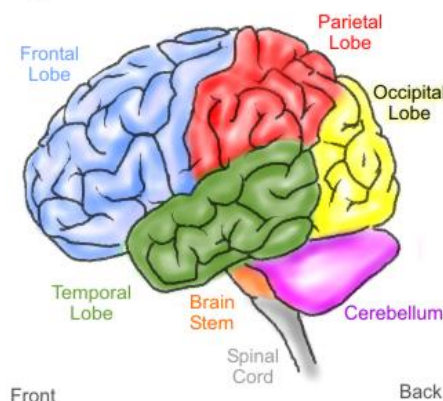
The opposite is the "Parasympathetics" – simplified to rest and digest. When the parasympathetics are more active we enjoy life, we savour new experiences and are healthy. Sympathetics cause illness and age us faster. Have you noticed that stressed people always look older?

### IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BRAIN

I've tried hard to keep this bit simple. If you have a quick look at the pic, you'll notice there are 4 main parts to the brain. Let's keep their function & responsibilities quick:

**Frontal lobe** – values, self worth, purpose. When active it dampens

Regions of the Human Brain



activity of the...

**Temporal lobe** – auditory processing, speech and is involved in the formation of memories, including spatial navigation, and expressive behaviours.

**Parietal lobe** – gets lots of sensory input from the body and occipital lobe to help the brain determine body position in space. Activity here also stimulates the frontal lobe

**Occipital lobe** – vision

If you don't assign value to something you are doing, or know your purpose and worth in living then the frontal lobe is not stimulated.

If the frontal lobe is bored then it no longer dampens the temporal lobe and this allows the sympathetics side of things to take over.

Put way too simply, if your body doesn't move well, and you don't value the things you do, this contributes to an increased sympathetic activity in your body and you are now stressed. NOT GOOD!

### SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The follow list is either common findings in stressed people, or increase stress in the body. How many apply to you?

- a loss of normal neck curvature – all but about 5 of any client I have x-rayed fits this category
- Don't eat a good breakfast
- Don't get adequate exercise
- Don't get adequate rest
- Your vision is getting worse
- You get dry eyes and these cause headaches (eye strain)
- Your sense of smell isn't what it used to be

- Food seems to taste bland so you need spices and sauces to make it interesting
- Your posture is slack and you carry your head forward with rounded shoulders
- Resting heart rate should be around 70 beats per minute – what's yours?
- Resting breathing rate should be about 12 breaths per minute – what's yours?
- Your digestion isn't great – perhaps more gas or infrequent bowel movements
- Your sexual function is reduced – females may be dry, men may have erectile problems

### SO WHY CARE ABOUT STRESS?

Stress increases the activity of the temporal lobe of the brain, and as we've mentioned this increases the sympathetic activity in the body – the fight or flight reaction. Did you realise that when in a constant state like this we become fatigued (chronic fatigue syndrome). When this happens, the nerves responsible for pain become more sensitive and often lead to chronic pain (also known as fibromyalgia). The production of hormones also gets thrown out of balance and we can become more emotional, perhaps even depressed. Bowel function alters and perhaps we get irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), or perhaps we develop gastric reflux problems, not to mention high blood pressure.

Most, if not all of these conditions are rampant in our society and are dealt with as symptomatic conditions, yet an underlying causative factor is the imbalance in the nervous system, and the lack of the right kind of stimulation for the brain.

### TV FOR TODDLERS

The American Pediatric society has made a ruling that children under the age of 2 should not be exposed to

television (period). Toddlers require stimulation of the parietal lobe so that the frontal lobe develops properly. So what you might ask?

We are born with under-developed frontal lobes. If they aren't properly stimulated within the first 2 years of life then it's fact that there will be impaired reading skills, learning difficulties, & delayed language acquisition, as well as subsequent behavioural problems.

### ADD & ADHD

Anyone for Ritalin? Attention deficit disorder (ADD) is a hypofunctioning brain. The frontal lobe is underdeveloped. Attention deficit and hyperactivity (ADHD) is where the frontal is underdeveloped and the temporal lobe is running rampant (the hyperactivity). Treatment is typically drugs to change the behaviour, yet we've just discussed that if the body is stimulated by activity, movement and exercises, the parietal lobe will be stimulated, this will in turn improve development of the frontal lobe, and this will dampen the temporal lobe and help control behaviour. Many children with ADD and ADHD benefit immensely from regular chiropractic



care due to this body / brain connection.

### WHY PROPER NECK CURVE IS SO IMPORTANT

We're born without normal neck curvature, but a child should start to hold their head up by about 3 months and this starts the formation of a lordotic curve. In addition we're born cross eyed and it's under the influence of the newly formed



lordosis that the eyes will start to align & focus better. A reduced neck curve has been linked to learning difficulties and reduced coordination. As adults a reduced curvature is typically linked to a stressful 'desk' posture, where many of the muscles around the front of the neck are tight and short, and the opposing extensor muscles are relatively inactive.

Incorrect neck curvature has been linked to

- less tolerance
- less compliance with instructions
- relationship stress
- parental stress
- altering our hierarchy of values

### WHAT ABOUT POSTURE?

What are your hamstrings like? Tight? Short? Is your posture a concern – rounded shoulders, head dropping forward? Put yourself in

this slumped position and try and take a deep breath. Difficult isn't it – the chest tends to rise vertically rather than expand outwards. Now sit upright, shoulders back and take another big breath. Notice the difference? Our stressed (often seated) lifestyles tend to mean that the muscles that flex us forward (poor posture) are shortened and tight, and the opposing extensor muscles are stretched and weak. So typically the back muscles are weak and don't support our spines well, the quads are weak, the muscles at the front of the neck are short and this drags the head forward. This pattern can be followed all around the body and with this physical example you can see how your physical appearance, your state of mind and health are intimately linked.

### PUTTING THIS ALL TOGETHER

Chiropractic care has been shown to stimulate the nerve endings that cause increased activity in the parietal lobe of the brain. If you are stressed, or perhaps suffering symptoms related to a stressful lifestyle, then it's entirely probable that the nerve / brain stimulation associated with chiropractic care can assist to help balance out the activity of your nervous system – and take you back into a more 'parasympathetic' level of functioning. This is not as far fetched

lifestyle, then it's entirely probable that the nerve / brain stimulation associated with chiropractic care can assist to help balance out the activity of your nervous system – and take you back into a more 'parasympathetic' level of functioning. This is not as far fetched as it



sounds. In the clinic I use a questionnaire to ask about changes in body function under chiropractic care, and a small selection of

responses are;

- Better digestion
- Clearer vision
- Increased energy levels
- Restored sexual activity
- Regular and less painful menstruation
- Mentally alert
- Toilet habits more regular
- Stamina improvements
- Increased strength & coordination

These are all improvements that occur due to a more balanced parasympathetic nerve activity, and are all body functions that occur automatically. care.

The human body functions better under chiropractic

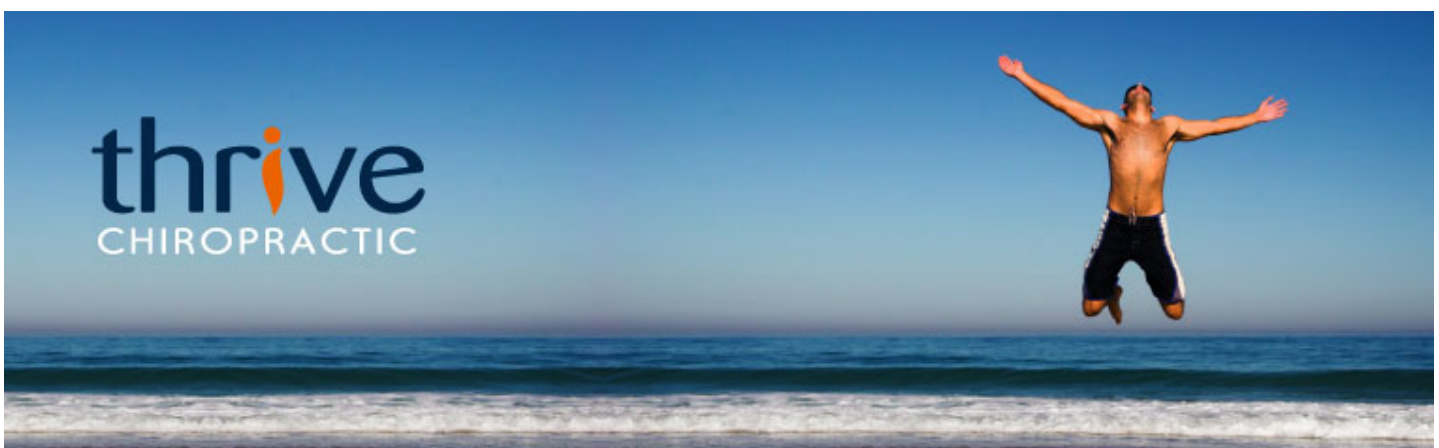
### THE TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Your health is more than just the absence of disease. In fact your state of mind plays an essential role in you maintaining excellent health. Chiropractic has the potential to be a vital component in achieving your ongoing health goals. Typically people seek chiropractic care for pain relief, yet most chiropractors will admit that they don't actually treat anything, except you as a whole via your nervous system.

Ongoing research further supports the effect that chiropractic has on stimulating your nervous system in a way that positively aids in balancing out the activity levels of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. As a result, your body is able to deal with illness, dysfunction and disease.



Most importantly, to get more out of chiropractic (or for that matter anything that you do in life) you need to recognize the value of the care you are receiving.



Prepared for your information, education and better health. Please feel free to distribute to friends and family.

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