

## IS YOUR BODY SUFFERING "RESPECT NEGLECT"?

Do you ever wonder why some people never complain of back or neck pain? Chances are these people have managed to avoid many of the spinal pain risk factors. These risk factors include such things as abnormal posture, imbalance between flexibility and strength (particularly involving the key postural muscle groups), incorrect spinal position, shape and alignment, lack of general physical fitness, previous trauma and others.

An important factor in spinal pain that is often overlooked involves the wisdom, or willingness, to respect one's body. Respect for one's body can have many dimensions. Most of these involve common sense, yet we all choose to ignore them regularly. The first act in truly respecting one's body is to *listen* and *learn*. You must listen to your body and learn what it's telling you. Our bodies have remarkable compensating abilities, and frequently problems can go unnoticed for long periods before significant pain or other symptoms start.

The key is to learn how to listen to your body so the early warning signs of something malfunctioning or being overloaded are recognized. An example is becoming aware of, and sensitive to, different kinds of pain: mild soreness, stiffness, ache, sharp pain upon sudden movement, general versus very localized pain, pain that seems to radiate or refer, and so on.

As a rule of thumb, mild soreness or stiffness following an activity is usually due to soft tissue overload of spinal discs, ligaments or muscles. The remedy is typically simple: change activity, change position and posture, and exercise opposite muscle groups. Sharp or radiating pain, or pain which persists, is a different story and is a sign you require professional help. Your chiropractic doctor is an expert in the diagnosis of joint, muscle and other musculoskeletal problems, and can assist you in regaining optimum health safely and effectively.

Respecting one's body also necessitates learning what one's limitations are, and respecting these limitations. If you want to maintain a healthy back and know from experience that 18 holes of golf two days in a row is more than what your back can comfortably do, respect it! Similarly, respect for one's body means getting frequent and adequate rest, optimum nourishment and regular, moderate exercise involving aerobic, strength and stretch components. Nothing earth shattering...just common sense!