

Staying the Course

February, 2017

By Dr. Derek Conte

Patients seek a chiropractor's help for a range of reasons. Some seek help because of an immediate need like sudden pain and injury. Some because they just been nagged by something or haven't felt so well recently. Some because the pain or dysfunction they have ignored for so many years have finally compromised their lives to the extent that they are having little enjoyment anymore. Some are young and otherwise healthy who have simple complaints. Finally, we have the erratic but well-meaning patient who has great success early and, before their case is stabilized, go away for months or even years and return in the shape that first brought them into the office. They simply will never follow to the doctor's recommendations!

These are very broad categories and certainly do not cover every scenario, but they account for the vast majority of cases. These different types of cases are sometimes best approached differently.

The first group would be considered emergencies and require care as soon as possible and as often as needed, sometimes every day for days, as is the case with automobile injuries or recreational injuries. This type of care is called "acute care". The care is weighted much more to the front-end in order to correct and stabilize the patient. As the patient progresses, the frequency of the care tapers off and finally a smooth transition into maintenance care can be made. It is important for post-injury patients to maintain a minimal course of scheduled care to prevent "breaking down" into the original injury pattern.

The next group have been recently nagged by a complaint that doesn't overwhelm them usually responds well within a week or two and easily settles into a maintenance schedule with no flare-ups.

The group who have suffered long with multiple complaints are usually older. Over time, the body has assumed a disadvantageous structure and the bones of the skeleton have actually changed their shape due to the tremendous movement restrictions they have endured for so many years without care. In cases like these the care is best when it is not too frequent in the beginning but is sustained for a longer period of time.

What would be better for them? Giving them 20 adjustments in 2 months or 20 adjustments in one year? To this writer, it is much better to bring that person along gradually and steadily over a long period of time so their bodies have ample time to adapt to the changes made. It took perhaps decades for them to arrive in the condition they are in. Isn't it logical that it will take a while for real lasting improvement to come? It is better to change the direction of this person's health status gradually.

"The young and the otherwise healthy" group tend to respond very quickly and require only one or two adjustments to be clear of any problems and can transition quickly into maintenance care.

Finally, we have the "wild hair" patient, who just cannot stick with any steady plan for their health. They are free birds who do things spontaneously and at the last minute. They wait and wait until the burden on them is so great that they need to dump it.....right into the doctor's lap!!! "Please fix me!" they say. These patients need our skills and our love just as much as any other and we never turn them away.

Dr. Derek Conte is co-founder of Chiropractic Specialists at 1154 Concord Road in Smyrna. For questions call 404-784-6008. For more information, articles, photos, etc. visit: drderekconte.com

