

## **Exercises and Stretching**

### ***Will They Get Rid of My Pain?***

*Exercising and stretching are integral parts of improving and maintaining your health. Physical activity is a vital part of maintaining a healthy body and mind. This article is focused on exercising specifically to help with aches and pains.*

Many people believe that all you need to do to prevent back pain or neck pain is to exercise. Some people stretch every morning and say this allows them to get through the day. Some people claim that they have had back pain for a long time and now that they exercise it is not as painful. The truth is that if there is a spinal problem, whether it is a degenerative disc, subluxation, sprain/strain; exercising or stretching alone will not correct the problem. In these situations it is little more than a superficial fix, covering up the problem underneath.

Stretching and strengthening exercises improve the tissues which surround the spine, such as muscles and ligaments. Improving these tissues is important but what is most important is the underlying structure, the foundation underneath all of these tissues; which is your spine and joints. Only once the foundation (your spine) is balanced and aligned will the stretching and exercising be beneficial.

Your spine is like a foundation of a house; it is the basic support structure in your body. Everything else is built upon this foundation. Muscles and ligaments attach to and surround the spine and the joints. Building muscle strength on top of an unbalanced degenerating spine is like building a beautiful house on top of a sinking, crumbling foundation. For a while it will seem that everything is ok, but eventually trouble will begin. In the end, the efforts will be largely wasted as the foundation (spine) continues to deteriorate in spite of the work on the rest of the house (muscles).

Chiropractic focuses on correcting the structure of your spine, ensuring that the joints are balanced and moving properly. Only once this foundation is corrected will working on improving the surrounding tissues be beneficial. This is the time when specific, prescribed exercises are the most beneficial. This is when you are building on top of a stable, strong and balanced foundation. These stretches and exercises now work to stabilize and prevent future injuries and pain.