

# Health for Y

Caring for yourself is as important as taking care of your cattle — chiropractic care and massage therapy can help.

by Kindra Gordon

**W**ith a new year upon us, many of us try to take stock of things we'd like to improve upon in the months ahead. Often, health and wellness are top of mind, and rightfully so. As the airplane analogy goes — you need to put on your own oxygen mask before you can help others. Put another way, in order to truly be your best — for your spouse, your family or your ranch business — you need to feel your best.

To that end, chiropractic care and massage therapy can offer a valuable, nonmedicated tool in your health and wellness needs. The two have existed and evolved for centuries and are recognized as a source of healing and health. Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, in the 5th century B.C., advised, "Get knowledge of the spine, for this is the requisite for many diseases."

Likewise, of massage he said, "rubbing can bind a joint that is too loose, and loosen a joint that is too rigid."

Today, chiropractic and massage therapy are often sought for healing back and neck pain or as a means of stress relief and muscle relaxation. Basic chiropractic care addresses

the nerve system based on the function or dysfunction (subluxation) of the vertebral joints and the spine. Massage therapy addresses the soft tissues — the muscles, fascia, tendons and ligaments.

## Healing benefits

Roy Trotter, a chiropractor at the Black Hills Chiropractic Clinic in Rapid City, S.D., acknowledges that chiropractic adjustments offer many alternatives for people who spend much of their time in the saddle or on the tractor. Trotter himself was raised riding horses and had a chiropractic practice in Montana for several years. Many of his clients had ranch backgrounds.

"One of the things I've found is that it's not if, but when, people who ranch experience small injuries," he says. Trotter explains that there are lots of little things that can lead to nerve and joint dysfunction. "The pelvis takes a lot of abuse and, over time, that transfers all the way up the spine to the neck," he says.

Sarah Strain, a Rapid City-based chiropractor, concurs that repetitive farm and ranch labor as well as riding horses can,

over time, lead to spinal subluxation. And, she says that when the spine or joints are not functioning properly it puts more pressure on nerves and can contribute to arthritis, reflux and other stomach conditions, and susceptibility to a cold. "Chiropractic care is good overall for total health," Strain says.

As another example of how ranch work and riding can cause joint dysfunction, Trotter points out that many people always mount their horse on the same side. Much of that torque is impacting the pelvis repeatedly in the same place, which can lead to a misalignment with the pelvis, and over time that may lead to leg length change and subluxations with the lower vertebrae, which equate to pain, Trotter explains.

But, he says, there is no need to live with pain. "Pain is a symptom. The traditional medical community leans toward treating that symptom with medication rather than treating the source of the pain. Through chiropractic adjustments we aim to address the source of pain," Trotter says.

As an analogy to this, he shares the example of a steering wheel that is shaky. He poses the question: "Would you go out and

## The history of chiropractic care

While treatment of the spine can be traced back for centuries, the actual profession of chiropractic as a distinct form of health care originated in 1895, when Daniel David (D.D.) Palmer began to develop and teach specific spinal adjustment.

Through adjustments to the spine, Palmer found numerous conditions responded well to what he called "hand treatments" — fevers broke, pain ended, infections healed, vision improved, stomach disorders disappeared and hearing returned. He realized spinal adjustments to correct vertebral misalignments, or subluxations, were eliminating the nerve interference causing the patients' complaints.

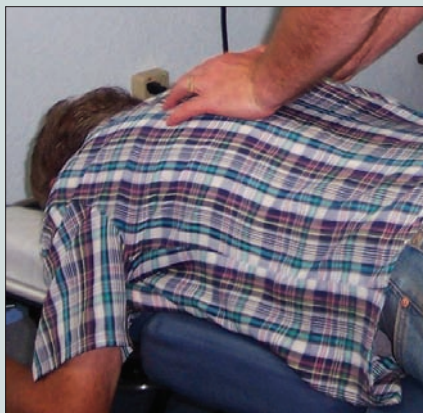
Later he coined the term chiropractic — from the Greek words, Chiro, meaning (hand), and practic, meaning (practice or operation).

At first, even though it proved to be a successful way of healing the body, chiropractic adjustments were not readily

accepted. And, in 1905, the medical establishment won a minor victory when they conspired to have D.D. Palmer indicted for practicing medicine without a license. He was sentenced to 105 days in jail and was required to pay a \$350 fine. From 1906 to 1913, D.D. Palmer published two books, *The Science of Chiropractic* and *The Chiropractors Adjuster*. He died in Los Angeles at the age of 68.

Luckily D.D.'s son, Bartlett Joshua, was as enthusiastic about chiropractic as his father and continued his father's work. He is credited with developing chiropractic into a clearly defined and unique health care system.

Although the profession has advanced tremendously since those early days, the basic tenets and understanding of chiropractic as a drug-free method of correcting vertebral subluxations in order to remove nerve interference still stand.



# yourself

bulk up so you can hang on to that steering wheel better (treat the symptom), or would you fix the wheel alignment on that vehicle so that the steering wheel no longer shakes (fix the problem)?”

As one example, Trotter says a key to minimizing spinal and joint dysfunction among horse riders is to make certain that your horse fits you. It is just like a piece of furniture — it has to fit comfortably.

“If people who do a lot of riding sit on a horse that has an odd gait, or sit in a saddle that fits improperly, or ride a horse that is too broad across the top to sit comfortably, all of those factors can affect the pelvis and spine. The body adapts to that ill fit, and eventually the person’s back and neck can begin to feel that in their joints and nerves,” Trotter says.

He continues, “A horse and saddle needs to fit each individual person. Knowing how to get on a horse properly and how to sit in the saddle is very critical.”

## Mix in massage

Massage can also be a therapy to help address pain, by promoting muscle relaxation, improving blood flow and releasing toxins from the body. Regarding massage and chiropractic, Trotter believes the two fit together nicely. He recommends patients get a spinal adjustment first to make sure the vertebrae are in proper alignment, and then follow that treatment with a massage to relax muscle spasms and release toxins.

Massage therapist JeanneLee Backhaus concurs that chiropractic care and massage can be very complementary treatments in helping the body to relax and heal. “After seeing a chiropractor, the chiropractor or client can tell me which particular area to focus on with their massage to address muscle tension,” she says.

Strain adds that massage can be beneficial in loosening the muscles so an adjustment holds better.

Backhaus has been a certified massage therapist since 1999 in Spearfish, S.D., and specializes in total stress relief massage using a combination of Swedish and Hawaiian techniques.

“I work on a great range of people, from young to elderly. I believe the biggest benefit of massage — even when you don’t have a

specific pain area to be treated — is to get the blood moving in the body,” Backhaus says. She explains that every organ in the body seeks the nutrients and oxygen that blood delivers. “The better your blood flow, the better the organs can work, especially among elderly people with less mobility,” Backhaus says.

Additionally, she explains that massage therapy also helps drain a lot of the body’s lymph cells. Thus, Backhaus says drinking a lot of water after a massage can help empty those toxins out of the body.

She concludes by pointing out that there are many different types of massage available — from stress relief and deep tissue, to neuromuscular regeneration and shiatsu.

So, it is important to visit with your massage therapist to match your needs with the different types of massage available.



## The history of massage

Massage may be the oldest and simplest form of medical care. It can be traced to Egyptian tomb paintings and is mentioned in a Chinese book from 2700 B.C.

In its origins, massage was used as a cure for pain and many ailments. While it still applies to that role, today it is also used widely for relaxation and comfort.

Swedish massage, the method most familiar to Westerners, was developed in the 19th century by a Swedish doctor, poet and educator named Per Henrik Ling. His system was based on a study of gymnastics and physiology, and on techniques borrowed from China, Egypt, Greece and Rome.

Today, a variety of massage techniques exist such as Reiki, shiatsu and deep tissue, and many have been incorporated into several other complementary therapies, such as aromatherapy, reflexology, Rolfing, Hellerwork and osteopathy.

Massage is used on athletes for their injuries and on everyday people to relieve stress. Bodywork therapy is also used frequently in intensive care units, for children, elderly people, babies in incubators and patients with cancer, AIDS, heart attacks or strokes.