

Why should Taekwon-Do practitioners be under Chiropractic care?

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Taekwon-Do practitioners train to learn the art of Taekwon-Do, rise through the ranks to achieve the highest level of black belt and/or to represent their country at the World Championships. Though everyone has a different reason for joining and further to continue their training. One thing remains the same that is for them to be the best that they can be. For that reason all Taekwon-Do practitioners should consider Chiropractic because it can care for any type of person helps to enhance a person's ability to help them achieve the highest level of greatness.

Taekwon-Do practitioners are foremost Martial Artists, as well as sportsman. Through regular club trainings, tournaments, gradings and camps, Taekwon-do practitioners put their bodies under various stresses due to a variety of vigorous movements and motions and rigorous training routines that push their bodies to the limit, that are both beneficial and detrimental to their health.

Chiropractic care is a primary health care profession that does more than injury relief of back and neck pain. Chiropractors look at the body as a whole specialising in the nervous, skeletal and muscular system connection, in particular looking for areas of nerve interference. Nerve Interference is when information from the brain to the different cells of the body and vice versa is not communicating effectively. It is these areas of interference that are deemed possibly subluxated. Therefore Chiropractors locate, analysis and correct vertebral subluxations through the use of specific chiropractic techniques to restore the nervous system and allow the body to function at it's optimal potential. (Vertebral Subluxation is defined by Stephenson's as "the condition of a vertebrae that has lost its proper juxtaposition with the one above or one below or both; to an extent less than a luxation which partially occludes an opening, impinges nerves and interferes with the transmission of mental impulses.)

A major commonality between Taekwon-Do and Chiropractic care is the non-selectiveness of who can participate and who can be cared for. Those currently training in Taekwon-Do in New Zealand range from mini kid classes of 5-year olds all the way to senior citizens. It can appeal to any age with respect, which is also shared with Chiropractic. It is never too early or too late to be under chiropractic care, as anyone with a spine and nervous system can be cared for. This allows both to be non-discriminative and more welcoming to all sorts of people from all sorts of backgrounds.

Taekwon-Do can simply be translated into foot-fist-art or way. In the name itself, it illustrates that a large majority is on the physical aspect. It is this physical aspect that pushes practitioners to perform various hand and foot techniques in different disciplines of patterns, sparring, self defence, fundamentals and destruction etc. Like in most sports that involve body contact, fast starts and sudden stops these actions place unusual amounts of strain on the skeletal and muscular system. This is where chiropractic care can help, as those mention prior would provide enough reason for practitioners to be vertebrally subluxated. A vertebral subluxation can be the

pain that you are experiencing or it could be unbeknown with no symptoms. They can occur by physical or emotional stress like from any type of activity to general day-to-day living. Chiropractic care therefore is individualized to the patient, as to what they come in presenting with. Hence why post adjustment, a Taekwon-Do practitioner can experience and notice a vast array of effects like:

- Improved posture
- Increased range of motion
- Improved coordination
- Improved immune system that can ward off common illnesses or disease
- Better focus and concentration
- Reduction of migraines or severe headaches
- Increased blood circulation
- Better joint flexibility
- Reduced risk of injury
- Increased blood and oxygen flow throughout the body
- Improved recovery rates after a sports injury
- Reduction of pain in major joints

The general belief of society is that “if it is not broke, don’t fix it.” This overly used quote clearly describes the general attitude towards health care. Nevertheless pain is not the only reason why you would go to a chiropractor. Though it is common amongst people to only see a chiropractor or even a physiotherapist etc. is when they are injured. For a lot of Taekwon-Do practitioners, it takes a hard training or a knock in a tournament to send them to see a professional. This idea is commonly known as ‘Treatment Based Care’ where Chiropractors have the reputation of being neck and back pain specialists. This is normally the majority of cases achieved, by Chiropractors as they help the body initiate correction through an adjustment with the correction of the subluxation and further more any nerve interference.

On the other hand there is the idea of maintenance style care. This style is based on regular check ups and if necessary adjustments to keep the body subluxated free. That is because various traumas, toxins and thoughts can cause subluxations. Thus why you are most probably subluxated due to these stresses of daily living etc., hence the reason why you will not be at your optimal potential. This idea of maintenance style care can be liken to you brushing your teeth at least twice a day. The idea is not to brush your teeth because they are sore but rather to look after them, which is exactly what a Chiropractor does for their patient’s health through adjusting their spine and correcting the communication of the nervous system. The regularity of appointments would depend on what you as a patient is presenting with and what the Chiropractor recommends is best for you. It is this style of care that makes the most sense for a Taekwon-Do practitioner. This regular style of care could be anything from monthly, fortnightly or weekly visits to correlate with the intensity and amount of training performed.

Clearly summarised, for a Taekwon-Do practitioner to be performing at their most optimal potential is to adopt the idea of effectively using Chiropractics, not after an injury happens but

before it occurs. Whether it is for the need to recover from injury, improve performance or to increase joint flexibility, ongoing chiropractic care would be a valuable addition to a training regime. This way not only helps the body to heal faster but to be effectively communicating so the practitioner can perform for example Hwa Rang with maximum power, grace and good technique.

Another reason that Taekwon-Do and Chiropractic go together is because they both benefit the body by training and increasing proprioception. By definition, proprioception is “the unconscious perception of movement and spatial orientation arising from stimuli within the body itself”. A prime example is the ability to walk with your head held high without needing to look at your feet to know where you are walking. A Taekwon-Do example of proprioception is a practitioner’s ability to perform a pattern with their eyes up. This is because they are able to form the movements with balance and precision due to them being able to accurately judge where they are in space. Through repetitive training of various movements, stances and techniques, it is the way for proprioception to be enforced, strengthened and developed for what becomes acquired for a practitioner to perform Taekwon-Do. For example the pattern Juche tests the acquired proprioception developed in the knee, ankle and tarsal joints to be able to perfectly perform a balanced slow motion side-piercing kick into a high reverse hook kick. However as Taekwon-do trains and reinforces the body’s proprioception it can also be affected through injury or nerve interference. This is where chiropractic care can help. In Chiropractic research conducted it has shown that specialized chiropractic adjustments can help to improve proprioception. This is due to the recognition that a subluxation can impair joint proprioception therefore distorting the input into the higher brain centers. In relation to a Taekwon-Do practitioner when subluxated it can cause the impairment to subsequently affect motor control, which could lead to a case of instability of the ankle joint for example. Therefore correcting the subluxation will allow any affected areas of proprioception to as well be corrected and therefore allow optimal performance, inadvertently avoid any further injury or for a simple case of someone not to have an off day at training.

The main focus of this essay is enlightening Taekwon-Do practitioners on the benefits of chiropractic care, however there is always two sides to a story and some people can be skeptical. It can be said that Chiropractic is an unorthodox profession, which manipulates patient’s necks and backs. This view and any other negative connotations arise predominately from confusion and misunderstanding. Too many people are quick to judge without adequate research and/or experience. A novice can be easily misled by hearsay. As well as be confused about the differences between Chiropractors, Osteopaths and Physiotherapists. The major reason is that most people group these health professions together as injury treatment and pain healers. The main idea I want to stress is that each profession specializes under a particular philosophy, art and techniques. Therefore they should be regarded separately rather than collectively, as you would not get the same type of care at each of them.

For some people, they need factual evidence in the form of scientific research and quantitative data to believe in the effectiveness of Chiropractic care. At this current time there has been no clinical research conducted in relation to Taekwon-Do and Chiropractic. Therefore no facts and figures on how much percentage a practitioner can improve, how different areas of their performance or their body are affected and many more. It however leaves room for these

questions to later be researched. The closest type of research so far carried out has been on World Taekwon-Do Federation (WTF) members of the Canadian National Team and their utilization of Chiropractic following a sports-related injury. The study though, did not conclude to any significant findings, other than more research should be conducted.

Despite a lack of clinical research between Taekwon-Do and Chiropractic, there has been a considerable amount of different investigations and research carried out in other sporting fields. One very investigation was published in *Chiropractic: The Journal of Chiropractic Research and Clinical Investigation*. The results of this 1991 study suggested that chiropractors have a positive influence on an athlete's performance. Of those athletes tested the results showed them to be exhibiting a 30% improvement. There was several aspects of athletic ability that were tested, which included kinaesthetic perception, power, reaction time, agility and balance over a course of 12 weeks while under chiropractic care. Though not specific it can be associated to one of many effects experienced by a Taekwon-Do practitioner under care, which would be highly beneficial to their trainings.

Further more a growing trend has arisen in America, into the specialisation of Sport Chiropractics. Elite athletes like Michael Jordan, Derek Rose, Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong and Evander Holyfield to name a few are under and use chiropractic care to help them excel in their sport. For those mentioned that have retired, they have made statements, thanking chiropractic for its help during their career. For example Evander Holyfield, boxing Heavyweight Champion is quoted "I have to have an adjustment before I go into the ring. I do believe in chiropractic. I found that going to a chiropractor three times a week helps my performance." Though he is a boxer, a connection can be made that would most likely resonate with those who are serious tournament competitors who spar. These testimonials from various athlete's at the top of their chosen sport prove Chiropractic care is not limited to a specific sport, body type or age and therefore it can be incorporated at any level of sporting ability.

In the end it comes down to the Taekwon-Do practitioner's own choice, whether or not chiropractic care is for them. To conclude, Chiropractic care is overall beneficial to one's performance and can easily be adapted into their training regime. The fact that Chiropractic care can help before during and after an injury is highly useful for any Taekwon-Do practitioners to keep up regular training and to achieve their goals.

Utterly there is nothing wrong in wanting to be the best that you can be and visiting a chiropractor is one of many ways outside of Taekwon-Do of achieving your dreams. It is becoming the competitive advantage for many sporting athletes world wide and why not be the same for Taekwon-Do.

For more information about chiropractic visit the New Zealand Chiropractor's Association website: <http://www.chiropractic.org.nz/> or ask any chiropractor.