

Gentle Chiropractic Helps Keep Tough Back Pain at Bay

Treatment Modes Available:

- Traditional chiropractic
- Sports chiropractic for improved movement and injury prevention
- Gentle chiropractic for stress relief and improved mind-body connection

Jonathan, a program manager at a major technology company, loves the intensity of his martial-arts fitness routine. Three or four times a week he spends an hour grappling on the jiu-jitsu mat, pitting his 50-plus-year-old body against all comers, including agile 20-somethings.

Jiu jitsu is a discipline of both mind and muscle. It teaches fighters to use body awareness and an understanding of weight and leverage to take opponents—even bigger, stronger ones—to the ground. It makes Jonathan feel strong and full of accomplishment.

But his time on the mat does more than that, too, he says.

“I think most diseases start as stress,” Jonathan says. Hours of sitting in meetings or at the keyboard...frequent hard deadlines...the unrelenting focus needed to keep big projects and work teams on track all add up to physical and mental tension.

But martial arts diffuses the unhealthy stress. It gets him up and moving and focuses him, helping tensions subside—most of the time.

Occasionally, though, Jonathan's stress builds up unnoticed until it explodes into low-back pain. That can keep him off the jiu-jitsu mat for a week or longer, stopping his happiness-making, stress-busting health regimen in its tracks.

Wanted: Help for stress-related misery

Over a decade ago Jonathan went looking for a health practitioner to help keep him in fighting shape.

"I wanted something that worked *with* the body."

He wanted therapies that would address stress and other underlying issues, not a quick fix like prescription pills that mask pain. "And I wanted something that worked *with* the body," he says.

He tried traditional chiropractic, which adjusts the spine with strong pressure, but it wasn't for him. "It seemed to be shocking the body back into where you wanted it—instead of tapping its natural tendency to align itself and heal," he says.

When he followed a friend's recommendation to try a newer, more gentle form of chiropractic, he finally found the results he wanted.

Dr. Craig, who offers the light-pressure treatments, became Jonathan's "family doctor," providing care for not just Jonathan but his wife and their teenage son, too.

Eliminating tension, pain

All chiropractic care applies pressure to the spine and other parts of the body to ease tensions that can cause stiffness and pain, especially back pain. But Dr. Craig does it differently.

"What's unique about Dr. Craig is that he doesn't have just one way of looking at the body," Jonathan explains.

He works in three main modes:

“He’s even emailed me exercises and stretches I can do on my own at home.”

- Traditional chiropractic, which uses strong pressure to adjust the spine;
- Sports chiropractic, which uses an understanding of balance, posture and physical alignment to improve athletic performance and help prevent injury; and
- A newer form of chiropractic that focuses on how the brain and nervous system connect to the musculoskeletal system in a fine-tuned feedback system. Treatments in this mode use gentle pressure to help the nervous system tune in to and resolve areas of bodily tension.

Dr. Craig mixes traditional and newer methods to meet a client’s individual needs.

Tailored treatments

While Dr. Craig’s in-office treatments combine therapeutic approaches, the doctor also offers tips for self-care.

“He’s even emailed me exercises and stretches I can do on my own at home when I’ve asked about some particular issue,” he says.

Appointments are low-key, focused on communication and never uncomfortable, says Jonathan.

If Dr. Craig needs to work with a pressure point in a sensitive area, such as near the tailbone or thigh, he checks with the patient first.

“He’ll first let you know what points he’s going to touch so you’re not taken by surprise. And if you’re uncomfortable with it, you can ask that it not be done,” Jonathan says.

As for when to book appointments, Jonathan listens to his body.

“It’s like your body becomes aware of tension and can release it once you realize it’s there.”

“There’s never any pressure from Dr. Craig about when I’ll come back to see him,” says Jonathan. “It’s based on my own intuition about how I’m doing, whether I’m experiencing pain or feeling on the cusp of pain.”

On the rare occasions when one session hasn’t quite done the trick, Jonathan’s been able to schedule another within just a few days to address remaining issues. “It’s flexible, and I appreciate that,” he says.

And fortunately the office accepts several types of insurance.

“I don’t have to work the insurance circuit either, because Dr. Craig takes care of all the claims directly,” Jonathan says.

Back in fighting shape

The gentle chiropractic sessions help keep Jonathan’s occasional low-back pain flare-ups from becoming chronic.

They work with his own body to unravel pain and stiffness, which dissipate within a day typically.

“It’s not like Dr. Craig presses a pressure point and the pain disappears,” he says. “Instead, it goes from an acute pain to a much duller one, and then I start to feel more mobility. It’s like your body becomes aware of areas where there’s tension and can release it once you realize it’s there. Usually, by that evening or the next morning, the pain’s pretty much gone.”

Giving gentle chiropractic a try is a low-risk action that could have a big payoff for someone prone to low-back pain, he says.

“If you haven’t had good results with traditional chiropractic, or are afraid that prescription drugs or surgery might be your only options, I’d try this for 30 days to see if it helps.

“It really works for me,” he adds. “It keeps my stress down, my pain away, and lets me keep doing jiu-jitsu.”