

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Shirley, Dr. Choate, Dr. Altringer, & Dr. Smith

## Chiropractic Education: What You May Not Know

*Anatomy, physiology, nutrition, biomechanics, orthopedics, spinal analysis, microbiology, geriatrics, cardiovascular disorders and toxicology.*

*These are just a few of the graduate level courses doctors of chiropractic — like your doctor at Spinal and Sports Care Clinic — are required to successfully complete before entering into practice.*

### Requirements for Admission

Along with completing many other requirements before admission to chiropractic school, students must complete several pre-requisite college courses. These courses are the same as those required by medical schools.

This “pre-med” curriculum includes courses in general chemistry, organic chemistry, physics, biology and psychology.

### Chiropractic School Curriculum

In chiropractic school, your doctor at Spinal and Sports Care Clinic received extensive and rigorous training.

“Chiropractor colleges require a minimum of four academic years of professional resident study (not less than 4,200 clock hours), including clinical experience under strict supervision, preceded by a minimum of two years of college work with a curriculum concentrated in the biological and

basic sciences, and clinical disciplines. The remaining two years emphasize practical or clinical studies dealing with the diagnosis and treatment of disease with approximately half the time spent in college clinics.” (*Chiropractic First Source*.)

The program of study at all chiropractic schools is divided into Basic and Clinical Sciences. The average total number of basic science contact hours is 1,420, which accounts for 30 percent of the entire chiropractic program. Basic sciences education includes an average of 570 hours of anatomy (40 percent of all basic science hours), 305 hours of physiology (21 percent), 205 hours of pathology (14 percent), 150 hours of biochemistry (11 percent), 120 hours of microbiology (eight percent), and 70 hours of public health (five percent).

On average, 70 percent of the program is composed of clinical education. Chiropractic schools devote an average of 3,380 contact hours to clinical education: 1,975 hours (58 percent) are spent in chiropractic clinical sciences and the remaining 1,405 hours (42 percent) are spent in clinical clerkships. These contact hours are in lectures, laboratories and clinics.

### Evidence-based Practice

Chiropractic schools focus on teaching students to follow evidenced-based



practice. This means adopting principles and clinical practices supported by research studies.

According to research, chiropractic students have a positive attitude toward evidence-based practice. One recent study pooled survey data from 674 students at 26 chiropractic schools in Australia, Canada, the US, Denmark and New Zealand participated. According to the report, “respondents generally agreed that the use of research evidence in chiropractic was important.” In total, 76% of respondents found it easy to understand research evidence and 81% had some level of confidence assessing the general worth of research articles (*Chiropractic Manual Therapy* 2011;3:6).

### Don't Let Imitators Fool You

The educational requirements for doctors of chiropractic, like your doctor at Spinal and Sports Care Clinic, are specific to the practice. In contrast, the curriculum followed by other health-care providers who practice spinal manipulation may consist of attending only one weekend-long seminar. This cursory training may fail to provide the essential skills necessary to safely and effectively perform spinal manipulations.



**Dr. Shirley, Dr. Choate, Dr. Altringer, & Dr. Smith, (509) 922-0303**  
**Spinal & Sports Care Clinic, [www.spinalandsportscare.com](http://www.spinalandsportscare.com)**  
**12905 E. Sprague Avenue, Spokane Valley, WA 99216**

Chiropractors would not attempt to perform heart surgery or remove an appendix. They don't have the training for such procedures. Medical doctors who offer spinal manipulation as an "add on" service to their patients, similarly, may not have the necessary qualifications (unless they also have attended chiropractic school and have a chiropractic license).

Medical doctors aren't the only ones who offer "chiropractic-like" services without the extensive educational background in chiropractic arts. Physical therapists have gotten on the copycat bandwagon, too. Again, without the proper educational background — including hands-on training — it's risky business. That's why it is vitally important that you, as a patient, understand the educational differences between doctors of chiropractic, medical doctors and physical therapists when it comes to spinal manipulation.

### History of Chiropractic Education

The word "chiropractic" is derived from the Greek words "cheir" and "praktos," meaning "done by hand."

"From these simple beginnings, chiropractic became more sophisticated as a formal education program evolved, requirements by the schools were developed, and state and governing laws were established." (*American Chiropractic Association*, 1999.)

The field of chiropractic has a long and rich history. "One of the earliest indications of soft tissue manipulation is demonstrated by the ancient Chinese Kong Fou Document written about 2700 B.C., which was brought to the Western World by missionaries." (*American Chiropractic Association*, 1999.)

Chiropractic became more recognized in 1895 when Daniel David Palmer gave an 'adjustment' to what was felt to be a misplaced vertebra in the upper spine of a deaf janitor. Following the adjustment, the janitor's hearing was restored.

### Holistic and Healthy

Chiropractors focus on the body's muscular, nervous and skeletal systems — particularly the spine.

"Chiropractors believe interference with these systems impairs normal functions and lowers resistance to disease. They also hold that spinal or vertebral dysfunction alters many important body functions by affecting the nervous system, and that skeletal imbalance through joint or articular dysfunction, especially in the spine, can cause pain." (*Occupational Outlook Handbook*.)

The inherent ability of the body to heal without the use of drugs or surgery is a foundational element of chiropractic. Drugs, whether over-the-counter or prescription, are the last line of defense — not the first. Doctors of chiropractic prefer holistic healing methods and gentle adjustments of the spine to relieve pain and stimulate health.

### Continuing Education

US States, Canadian Provinces, Australian territories and regional governments in other countries have mandatory continuing education requirements to maintain or renew a license to practice chiropractic (*Official Directory of the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards*).

Continuing education keeps doctors of chiropractic up-to-date on a wide range of chiropractic issues and principles. It also keeps them on the forefront of the latest research.

### Gatekeepers

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), based in Scottsdale, Ariz., is the agency recognized by the US Secretary of Education for accreditation of programs and institutions offering the doctor of chiropractic degree.

Countries outside of the U.S. also have regulatory boards which exact high standards from practicing chiropractors.

The CCE and equivalent international institutions seek to insure the quality of chiropractic education by means of accreditation, educational improvement and public information.

The CCE's rigid standards, adopted by the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards, continue to insure the quality of its accredited programs and institutions.

Government organizations in countries throughout the world regulate the practice of chiropractic and grant licenses to chiropractors that meet their respective educational and examination requirements.

"Chiropractors can only practice in the States where they are licensed. Some States have agreements permitting chiropractors licensed in one State to obtain a license in another without further examination, provided that educational, examination, and practice credentials meet State specifications." (*Occupational Outlook Handbook*.)

### You're in Good Hands!

Doctors of chiropractic have the educational background and training necessary to assist you in obtaining a healthy and happy life.

By talking with patients and making these *Optimal Health University*<sup>™</sup> handouts available, this office is empowering you to learn all you can about your body, how it works, and how to heal it when it doesn't.

Now that you have this knowledge, put it to good use and schedule an appointment for yourself. And, while you're at it, schedule an appointment for a loved one as well. Information is power. Use it!

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