



are including stress management into their regular regime of care.

HANDS-ON-TREATMENT

To treat stress, chiropractors take a holistic approach that consists of regular adjustments, as well as nutritional and exercise counseling tailored to the needs of a particular individual. "People can be tested by a chiropractor to see whether there is actual nerve interference in their bodies that is giving stress a foothold on their health," says Dr. Michael Rider, a chiropractor with a private practice, Rider Chiropractic Center, in Dallas, TX. "If a chiropractor does nothing more than locate and remove the nerve interference, then that person's ability to handle stress in his or her life just went up many-fold. It all boils down to the adjustment, because what that does is remove pressure off the nerves."

He noted that it's important for patients to undergo an evaluation by a chiropractor to determine the regime of care that will best help reduce the stress in their lives. "Patients need to sit down with their chiropractor to have an appropriate evaluation," says Rider. "Some people may need to see a chiropractor once a week for the rest of their lives. Others might need to see a chiropractor once every two weeks, or

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just once a month. It all depends on the individual, and where they are in their health." Before treating a patient for stress, a chiropractor must "rule-out" other conditions that can exhibit similar symptoms as stress. "Chiropractors are obligated to do a history and physical examination to exclude other disorders that can cause headaches, such as high-blood pressure, sinus infections, refractive problems with vision or muscle tension," says Bub.

Chiropractors also help patients identify the "stressors" causing the physical discomfort in order to help relieve the pain. "When it comes to stress, a chiropractor may take on somewhat of a counselor role to help a person identify the changes in their lifestyle that are precipitating the emotional responses that are resulting in sore muscles," said Bub.

GET MOVING!

Meanwhile, exercise is an integral component in reducing the physical effects of stress. "Exercise helps burn up chemicals that are produced as a result of stress," says Bub. "When under stress, we have a change in carbohydrate, protein and fat metabolism. A lot of people under stress can put on weight."

For this reason, many chiropractors will teach patients exercises that can help relieve stress. "We will go over specific exercises with each patient."

However, he noted that "stretching is crucial" for all people. He recommends his patients engage in stretching exercises, as well as aerobic exercise—such as bicycle riding, swimming or walking - at least three times a week. "You want to get the blood flowing, and

keep the heart working properly," says Harvey.

In addition to physical exercise, Harvey recommends breathing exercises and meditation to his patients to help relieve stress. When it comes to an effective diet that will help combat stress, Harvey, like many chiropractors, promotes a low-fat diet, rich in fruits and vegetables.

