

Dr. Colin Gage * Dr. Duane Drobot

Nicola Valley Chiropractic
2076 Granite Ave.
P.O. Box 909
Merritt, BC
V1K 1R8

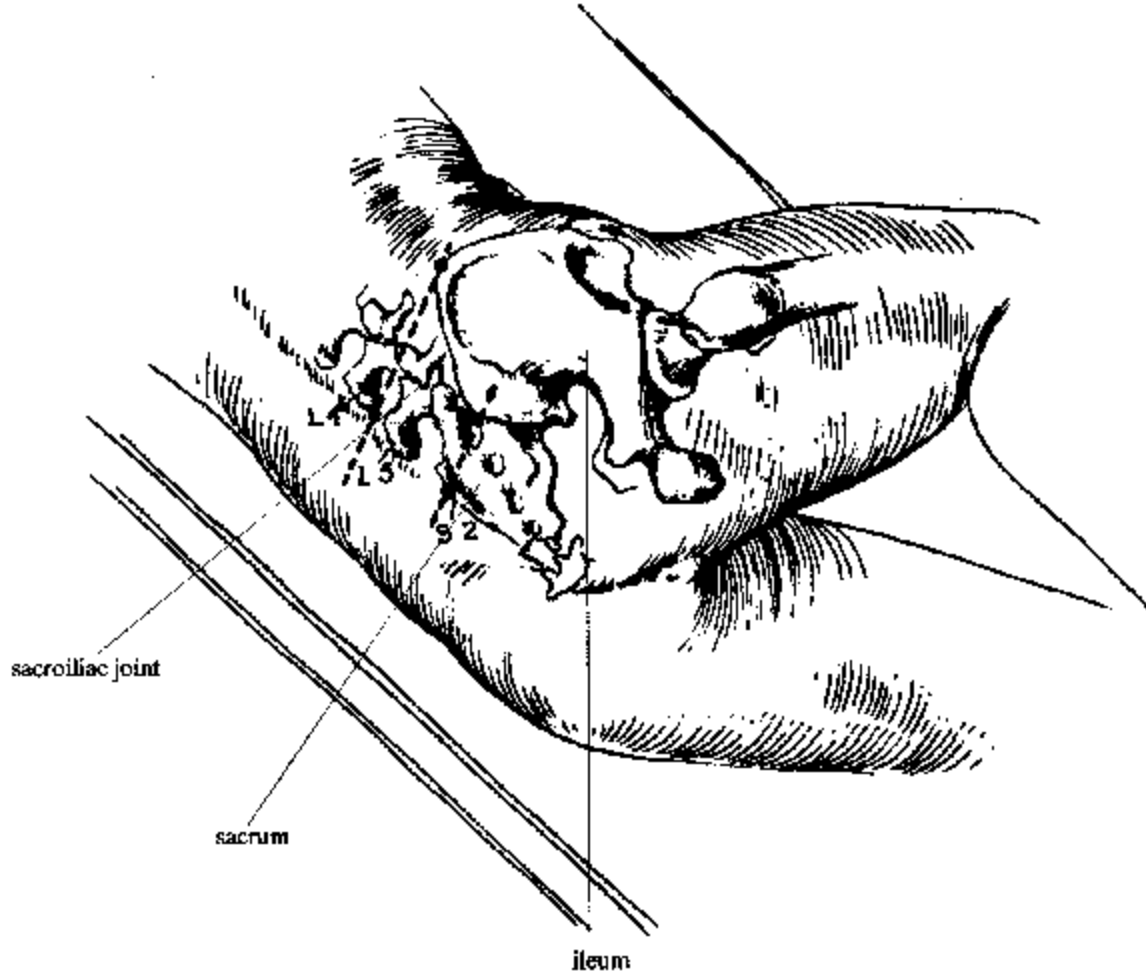
Ph: (250) 378-5456
Fax: (250) 378-8259
Email: info@merrittchiro.com
Website: www.merrittchiro.com

"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Correcting a "Short Leg"

Last week I discussed how a bone at each side of the pelvis (the ileum bone), not the hip, could become "fixed" or "stuck" in a forward or backward rotated position. Depending on which direction the pelvic bone is "stuck", the leg on the same side could appear short or long when compared to the opposite leg. I used a real example of a gentleman who had acute low back pain after spending his weekend raking his entire lawn. He had this exact problem. The joint between the sacrum and ileum bones of his pelvis (called the "sacroiliac" joint) had become restricted or stuck – the diagram shows the right sacroiliac joint of a normal person. Therefore, when he raked his entire lawn and applied stress to the sacroiliac joint by repetitively trying to make it move, the joint became acutely inflamed. The nerves that exit his lower spine and pass directly over the sacroiliac joint join together to make the "sciatic nerve". These nerves became irritated which resulted in a burning ache that extended down his left leg. Due to the fact that these nerves control all of the muscles in his lower back, he also experienced severe muscle spasms. The combination of a restricted or stuck joint, inflammation, nerve irritation, and muscle spasm is what chiropractors call a SUBLUXATION. This can occur in any joint in your spine or pelvis. Initially, the joint stiffness, inflammation, muscle spasm, and nerve irritation can be quite subtle and you may not even notice any significant pain. This is usually the case until you challenge the area by doing physical activity or experience higher levels of physical or emotional stress. This is when the problem becomes symptomatic.

Once we examined him fully and determined that it was not his "hip" or "spine" that was the problem, I explained to him that he had a subluxation in his left sacroiliac joint. He was then given a "scan" (this is actually an electromyogram and a thermogram) that measures which muscles along his spine and pelvis are tighter than normal, and where the skin temperature is different one side compared to the other. The nerves exiting the spine control both muscle contraction and skin temperature. Therefore, if one of these nerves is being irritated, the muscles in that region will be tight and the skin temperature will be altered. This test further confirmed his diagnosis of a subluxation, as well as identifying the severity and location of it.



Once it was identified what his problem was, treatment began immediately. He underwent some brief soft tissue therapy to decrease some of his muscle spasm. He was then instructed to lie on his right side so that the sore left side was up. I performed a brief non-aggressive “adjustment” to his left sacroiliac joint. He then stood up and immediately felt a relief of pressure from within the joint. I explained to him that the inflammation, irritated nerves, and muscle spasm were still there. I continued to tell him that as long as the joint is able to move properly and he remains mildly active, it would eventually heal properly. However, he must return for a series of adjustments in order to maintain the mobility within that sacroiliac joint as it heals. This will correct his actual problem instead of treating the symptoms alone. If he discontinued treatment too early, the restricted movement in that joint would have likely returned and made him vulnerable to have the entire scenario occur again the next time he challenged the joint.

After one week of treatment, the joint inflammation, muscle spasm, and nerve irritation was significantly reduced. The sciatica or leg pain he initially felt was almost gone and his ability to walk and bend over was much better. He was scheduled for another two weeks of treatment, after which he will be re-examined and re-scanned.

If you feel stiffness in your spine after waking up in the morning, sitting on a couch or chair, doing yard or household work, or feel stiff after lifting at your occupation, you may have a subtle subluxation that could become a more severe problem in the future. If you want more information on what a subluxation is, visit my website at www.merrittchiro.com.