

# Dr. Colin Gage

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Nicola Valley Chiropractic  
2076A Granite Ave.  
P.O. Box 909  
Merritt, BC  
V1K 1B8

Ph: (250) 378-5456  
Fax: (250) 378-8259  
Email: [info@merrittchiro.com](mailto:info@merrittchiro.com)  
Website: [www.merrittchiro.com](http://www.merrittchiro.com)

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

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## What to do for Chronic Back Pain

There is now a large body of scientific evidence that chiropractic care is effective and really the best choice of care for acute back pain. The word "acute" is used to indicate short-term back pain existing less than four to six weeks. Even the U.S. Agency for Health Care Policy and Research recommends chiropractic care for acute low back pain.

On the other hand, "chronic" back pain that continues for beyond six weeks has not had as much clear-cut evidence proving chiropractic care is effective. But, that is changing. A study published in a respected medical journal has shown chiropractic care to be beneficial for ongoing "chronic" pain.

Traditionally, when various forms of active therapies had not resolved back pain, allowing it to become chronic, the most common approach has been back pain school, or back education. These programs are designed to help patients cope and live with the pain, and to modify their activities and lifestyles to help reduce things that aggravate their painful condition. So, a study was set up to compare back education to chiropractic adjustments (spinal manipulation) for people with chronic back pain.

Two hundred and nine patients with low back pain existing for seven weeks or longer, or with more than six episodes in the past year, were randomly assigned to three groups. Each patient received either chiropractic manipulation or adjustments, fake or sham adjustments, or back education. At the end of a two-week treatment period and again two weeks later as follow up, the patients in the chiropractic adjustment group did significantly better than the other two groups. I would like to point out that the other two groups also showed some improvement, but significantly less than those getting adjusted. The researchers concluded, "spinal manipulation is clinically useful in chronic pain patients who have been suffering for seven weeks or more."

As a chiropractor, I know that just because someone has had a back problem for months or even years, this does not mean that chiropractic treatment cannot help them. Due to the fact that chiropractic treatment is safe and does not use drugs or surgery, there is no reason why anyone with chronic low back pain should not give it a try. If you are suffering with chronic back pain and would like more information, feel free to contact me directly.