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

Do You Have a Trigger Point?

Do you ever wonder what simple and safe treatment can be done to help headaches, neck stiffness, tennis elbow, rotator cuff injuries, frozen shoulder, back pain, low back stiffness, and some forms of sciatica? It is called "trigger point therapy". As a chiropractor, I use other treatments in addition to this and together they are very effective.

What is a trigger point? The most common ones are in your muscles and feel like small knots or taut bands of muscle fibers. Trigger points form in muscles which have been injured or overused. Common characteristics are a small, localized knot, with surrounding overall chronic muscle tension and dull pain. Trigger points can present themselves in many different ways, such as a dull ache, tingling, and pins/needles.

Trigger points can exist in two states, either active or latent. Active trigger points are those which cause discomfort. Latent trigger points wait silently in the muscle for a future stress to activate them.

Trigger points are not visible with traditional medical testing such as MRI or X-ray. When trigger points are not treated, they will create "satellite" trigger points in the affected area. For instance, a trigger point in the neck or shoulder muscle may cause a trigger point to appear in the temple. The trigger point in the temple then may cause a trigger point to appear in the jaw muscles. And so on.

To eliminate a trigger point, static compression (pressure) is applied for 10 seconds, released, then pressure applied for 10 more seconds in a pumping action while the client breathes deeply. This action flushes the toxins built up by the muscle being in a chronic state of contraction. This is "trigger point therapy" and is not a relaxing, "touchy/feely" technique. It requires the participation of the client to communicate the presence and intensity of pain and discomfort. The chiropractor and patient work together as a team to maximize the effectiveness of the treatment while not causing severe pain.

It is common to find great improvement after one treatment. Repeated treatment may be necessary for those with chronic trigger points. Stretching should be done as "home work" to encourage the muscles that have been treated to stay in a lengthened position.

Trigger point research lists nutritional deficiencies or inadequacies as "perpetuating factors." A good multi-vitamin supplement that is high in anti-oxidants and is in an encapsulated form can help ensure that once treated, trigger points do not reform.

For many musculoskeletal injuries, a combination of joint manipulation and trigger point therapy can be very effective. Both treatments do not require drugs and have very few physical side effects. For more specific information or to enquire about a problem you may have that could respond to this type of treatment, feel free to contact me directly.