

Dr. Colin Gage

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
Website: www.merrittchiro.com

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

Got A Trigger Point?

What is a trigger point? I am glad you asked because I doubt that there is a single reader of this article that does not have one somewhere in his or her body. Before you get alarmed, let me explain to you what they are. A trigger point is a highly irritable localized spot of exquisite tenderness in a nodule or palpable taut band of muscle tissue. What this means is that they are small localized and painful knots in the muscle. When pressure with even a finger is put on these spots, they really hurt. As well, you don't have to have an injury for trigger points to develop. They can appear after periods of poor posture, stress, lack of exercise, and even too much exercise.

A trigger point occurs when a few of the microscopic muscle fibers in a muscle stay contracted or shortened, even when the rest of the muscle is relaxed. This causes blood flow to stop in the immediate area of the trigger point. Blood flow is necessary to nourish the muscle tissue as well as eliminate metabolic (activity) wastes. This results in oxygen starvation and accumulation of waste products irritating the trigger point. The trigger point then sends out pain signals. The problem is that the pain is usually referred – sent to some other part of the body. Unfortunately, conventional treatments focus on the site of the pain itself but the actual source of the pain is nowhere near where the pain is felt which could be a good distance away from the area of pain. As a chiropractor, I have to be aware of where these trigger points refer pain. Too many health care practitioners focus on treating the area that hurts rather than identifying where the pain could originally be coming from.

I see these painful trigger points in almost all of my patients. When someone has neck pain, back pain, headaches, buttock pain, or leg pain, trigger points can almost always be found to exist even when other problems such as joint and nerve irritation are the primary problem.

In closing, if you feel “knots” in your neck, shoulders, back, or pelvis, there is likely a problem brewing that will eventually become more debilitating down the road. As a chiropractor, it is my job to find these trigger points and “release” them by applying specific pressure on the contracted muscle tissue. Other techniques such as stretching and exercise would also help. Often, the joints and nerves adjacent to the affected muscles are also not functioning well. A stiff joint or irritated muscle can cause trigger

points to occur, and vice versa. Thus, it is important to address all the problems in the area, not just the trigger point.

If you think you have a trigger point and would like some relief, or if you just have questions, feel free to contact me at my office.