

# FACT SHEET

## FEET, KNEES & HIPS



### **WHAT IS CHIROPRACTIC?**

Chiropractic is the third largest primary health care profession in the world after medicine and dentistry and offers an alternative to medication and surgery for many conditions.

### **WHO REGULATES THE PROFESSION?**

In the UK, Chiropractic is a fast-growing, independent profession regulated by the General Chiropractic Council.

### **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Chiropractic places its emphasis on the diagnosis and management of problems affecting the nerves, muscles or joints of the body.

### **WHAT CAN CHIROPRACTORS DO?**

Most people associate Chiropractic with the treatment of back pain, neck pain and headaches but Chiropractors treat many other conditions as well, in fact, most ailments involving any bone, joint or muscle, including feet, knees, hips, arms, shoulders and hands. Chiropractors use a holistic approach that takes into consideration your overall health and lifestyle.

Although best known for manipulating joints (also known as 'adjusting'), Chiropractors can utilise a number of different procedures in the course of patient care such as heat, cold, electrical stimulation, ultrasound, traction, postural support exercise programmes and dietary management.

### **HOW MAY I FIND OUT MORE?**

For more information on Chiropractic, or to find out how your Chiropractor can help you, please call the telephone number below.

### **LOOK AFTER YOUR LEGS AND THEY WILL LOOK AFTER YOU**

Your feet, knees and hips are in constant demand throughout the day and often under pressure.

Chiropractors are trained to look at how the hips, knees and feet affect - and are affected by - the rest of your body, especially your spine.

This leaflet provides advice on some of the more common problems with the lower limbs and how they can be helped.

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### COMMON PROBLEMS TREATED BY CHIROPRACTORS

#### FEET & ANKLES

Most of us will have twisted an ankle at some time. The most common injury to the ankle, the 'common ankle sprain', is usually caused by turning it in, such as when wearing high heels, or turning it over by stepping on a stone or the edge of a kerb.

Only occasionally, the end of the bone on the outside of the ankle breaks. More often, however, it is the ligaments of the ankle on the front and side that tear and produce swelling and bruising.

It usually takes between four and six weeks to recover from the immediate injury but sometimes the joints and ligaments of the foot don't fully recover. This can cause problems to recur in the ankle or other areas to be put under strain. The ankle, or other joints in the foot, may remain restricted, or the ligaments may not repair satisfactorily on their own. Because the injury may have healed poorly in this way, it is common to roll the ankle and sprain it again after the initial injury.

#### KNEES

The knee is the largest joint in the body and as such has a few unique features to allow it to do its job: It relies on strong ligaments to keep the two bones together and has two sickle-shaped pieces of cartilage to allow the bones to fit well against each other.

The kneecap helps the pulley mechanism of the front thigh muscles to straighten the knee more effectively. Bending and twisting actions often caused by skiing or football injuries can damage the ligaments and cartilages of the knee joint. With age, the joint both at the kneecap and at the main joint can be prone to wear and tear leading to osteoarthritis.

#### HIPS

Arthritis is the most common hip problem (see right for more details on Arthritis).

Early signs include stiffness in the groin and often sharp pain on some movements. Strangely, early arthritis of the hip often causes pain in the knee and either of these symptoms can exist for years and not be recognised as the early signs of arthritis. Again, hip problems can often cause strain on other areas, which may require attention to prevent problems.

Your Chiropractor will recognise this as early as possible and be able to treat and advise you accordingly.

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It is a common misconception that Chiropractors only treat back and neck conditions. Here are some conditions that Chiropractors treat every day:

### **Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid Arthritis**

Arthritis is a term most people recognise but different mechanisms cause the painful and disabling joint pain.

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease and the result of "wear and tear". Rheumatoid Arthritis is an auto-immune disease where the body attacks its own tissue - in this case the lining of the joints.

In spite of these differences, both conditions may benefit from Chiropractic care. By enabling the joints to move as freely as possible and relaxing the surrounding muscles, the result of treatment is often much less disability and pain.

### **Osteoporosis**

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to fracture due to a loss of calcium and other mineral components. This condition is often called the "silent disease" because bone loss may occur without symptoms.



### **Pronation**

Pronation is the term used to describe the rotation of the foot so that the inner edge of the sole bears the body's weight. It is a normal and important event in the walking pattern, enabling the foot to work as a shock absorber for the body. However, over-pronation (excessive rotation) can cause problems in the feet such as flat feet, bunions and widening of the forefoot. Knee, hip or back pain may also be caused purely by over-pronation in the feet.

It is therefore important to recognise the condition and your Chiropractor will be able to advise on the correct shoes to wear and on exercises, which will help to strengthen your feet. Sometimes insoles or 'orthotics' are needed to support the feet and protect the structures above.

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