

More Than Just Back Pain

By Dr. Derek Conte

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Ed is a vigorous 88 year-old man who still does all his own yard and handiwork at his home. He is strong, trim, solidly built, and has an effortlessly crushing handshake. This man is a great physical specimen, like a pioneer of old. I hope to be like him when I'm his age.

Ed first came to the office in 2020 after his riding mower tipped, tossing him onto his left haunch, causing strong left sacroiliac and lumbar pain. His past history included bilateral hip replacements and a knee replacement, but after a few adjustments he was fine and I didn't see him for about four years.

Recently, he came in again with a complaint of severe left leg and sacroiliac joint pain, much worse than before, preventing him from even sleeping in bed. He had to use a recliner because straightening his legs caused intense pain. He said the pain began about one month earlier. The pain quality was throbbing and sharp, worsening when he was still and somewhat relieved by movement. But there was a little more to the story, as I would find out later.

We began, as we usually do, with a thorough posture analysis, balance and movement assessment and a palpation of the full spine. Ed could not straighten his leg at the hip, forcing a noticeable limp. It pained him to get on the table, so we did the first adjustment with his knees bent.

One might not think that pain in the low back and sacrum could be related to the top bone in the neck, but as gentle, sustained pressure was applied just below Ed's left ear to the Atlas bone, we both heard and felt a small "pop". This allowed him to straighten his legs, but the pain was not fully resolved.

Ed had two more visits over the next two weeks and in that 3rd visit, even though his legs were balancing now and the pain was much less, I noted a big reversal in Ed's pelvic rotation in the opposite direction seen in the first 2 visits. It was very counter-intuitive and unusual, but it was what it was and we adjusted his pelvis accordingly. There was a large release sound upon the adjustment and Ed came off the table like a different guy. No more pain or limp.

I advised a one-week follow-up to be sure Ed was clear of the problem and that's when I found out the part he didn't tell me at first: "Thank you, Doc, I had two months of pain and no marital relations with my wife, but now everything's back to normal!" God Bless Ed.

Dr. Derek Conte is co-founder of Chiropractic Specialists at 1154 Concord Road in Smyrna. For questions, call: 404-784-6008. For more articles, info, photos, go to: drderekconte.com.