

# Commonly Used Terms in Chiropractic

We do our best to use everyday language in our patient explanations. In case we don't, here are some common terms and their meanings.

**Acute** Relatively severe and of short duration.

**Adjustment** The use of a pressure or force in specific location, direction and time to the spine or other articulations of the body to help normalize function.

**Anterior** Toward the front of the body.

**Arthritis** Inflammation of a joint which is often accompanied by symptoms and changes in structure.

**Atlas** The top and most freely moving bone of the spinal column.

**Axis** The second cervical vertebra.

**Bone Spur** A bony outgrowth. A calcium deposition which can be part of the body's response to abnormal motion or position of bones in the spine or elsewhere.



CERVICAL

**Cervical** The vertebrae of the neck, usually seven bones.

**Chronic** Persisting for a long period of time. A problem showing little change or with a slow progression.

**Coccyx** A series of small bones below the sacrum that are also known as the tailbone.

**Compensation Reaction** A new problem that results from the body's attempt to respond to a problem elsewhere.

**Compressive Lesion** A malfunctioning spinal bone or soft tissue that puts direct pressure on a nerve, distorting its function. A relatively rare phenomenon that is commonly referred to as a pinched nerve. (See Facilitative Lesion.)

**Disc** A cartilage (cushion/pad) that separates spinal vertebrae, absorbs shocks to the spine, protects the nervous system and assists in creating the four normal curves of spine. A disc can bulge, herniate or rupture, but because of the way they connect to the vertebrae above and below, a disc can't "slip."

**Edema** A condition in which fluid fills a damaged joint area causing swelling; similar to the swelling of a sprained ankle or black eye.

**Extremity** Lower or upper limbs, such as a leg or arm.

**Facet** The joint surface of a spinal bone, facing the adjacent bone above or below.

**Facilitative Lesion** A twisting, stretching, chafing or irritation of nerve tissue from malfunctioning spinal structures.

**Fixation** Being held in a fixed position. "Stuck." A joint with restricted movement.

**Foramen** An opening, a hole or passage-way in a bone for blood vessels or nerves.

**Health** A state of optimal physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity. When your body works the way it was designed to work.

**Herniation** A protrusion of an organ or part of an organ through the wall that normally contains it.

**Hypermobility** Too much movement.

**Hypomobility** Restricted movement.

**Ilium** One of the two large bones that form the pelvis; the hipbone.

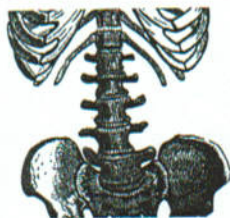
**Inflammation** A reaction of soft tissue due to injury that may include malfunction, discomfort, rise in temperature, swelling and increased blood supply.

**Intervertebral Foramina** The lateral opening through which spinal nerve roots exit each side of the spinal column formed by each spinal joint.

**Kyphosis** A backward displacement in the lateral curve of the spine.

**Lateral** The side view of the body.

**Ligament** A band or sheet of fibrous connective tissue that binds joints together.



LUMBAR

**Lordosis** The forward curve of the spine. Normally found in the cervical and lumbar areas of the spine.

**Lumbar** The vertebrae of the lower back, usually five bones.

**Nucleus Pulposus** The gelatinous mass in the center of a spinal disc.

**Occipital** Pertaining to the lower, posterior portion of the head or skull which rests on the spinal column.

**Palpation** Examining the spine with your fingers; the art of feeling with the hands.

**Pinched Nerve** (See Compressive Lesion.)

**Posterior** Toward the back of the body.

**Range of Motion** The range, measured in degrees of a circle, through which a joint can be moved.

**Reflex** An involuntary action resulting from a stimulus.

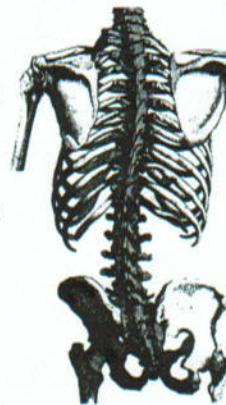
**Sacroiliac** The two joints where the pelvis (hip) connects to the sacrum.



SACROILIAC

**Sacrum** The triangular bone at the base of the spine.

**Sciatica** A pain that radiates from the lower back into the buttocks and down the back of one or both legs caused by the irritation of the sciatic nerves, the largest nerves of the body.



SCIOUSIS

**Scoliosis** Looking from the back, a side-ways curvature of the spine.

**Slipped Disc** An incorrect name given a situation in which a disc becomes wedge-shaped and bulges. In extreme cases, pressure can cause a disc to tear or rupture. (See Herniation.)

**Spasm** A constant contraction or tightening of a muscle.

**Spinous Process** The protruding part of the back of each spinal bone that can be seen or felt when examining the spine.

**Subluxation** A misalignment or malfunction of the spine that is less than a total dislocation, which affects the nervous system and its ability to correctly control or monitor the organs and tissues of the body.

**Tendon** Fibrous tissue that connects muscles with bones.

**Thoracic** Pertaining to the 12 vertebrae of the middle back from the base of the neck to about six inches above the waistline to which the ribs attach.

**Torticollis** A contracted state of the neck muscles that produces a twisting of the neck and unnatural position of the head.

**Traction** The act of drawing or exerting a pulling force, as along the long axis of a structure.

**Transverse Process** Lateral protrusions (wings) on the side of each vertebrae to which powerful muscles and ligaments attach.

**Trigger Point** An involuntarily tight band of muscle that is painful when pressed and can refer pain to other parts of the body.

**Vertebra** Any of the individual bones of the spinal column.

**Vertebral Subluxation Complex** Types of pathology resulting from a Vertebral Subluxation including kinesiopathology, neuropathophysiology, myopathology, histopathology and pathophysiology.

**Whiplash** An injury to the spine caused by an abrupt jerking motion, either backward, forward or from the side.