

What is the Blair Technique?

The Blair chiropractic technique is a specific system of analyzing and adjusting the upper cervical vertebrae of the spinal column. When these vertebrae misalign in such a way as to interfere with the brain stem and spinal cord as they exit through the floor of the skull and into the neural canal. Special attention is given to the first two cervical vertebrae, the atlas and axis, as they are the most freely moveable vertebrae in the spinal column and the ones most commonly misaligned.

After many years of research and study of all the techniques that were developing at the time, Dr. B.J. Palmer the developer of chiropractic realized that the only place a person could truly have interference to the nervous system was at the level of the base of the skull; and the atlas and axis vertebrae. There are no intervertebral discs between the skull and the atlas, or between the atlas and axis vertebrae. Most movement of the head and neck occur at this level. The joint surfaces in this area move more on a horizontal plane rather than a vertical plane as in the rest of the spine. This area is not supplied with the abundance of supporting ligaments that are found in the rest of the spine. As a result of these characteristics of the cervical spine, it becomes the weakest link in the chain when exposed to the forces of trauma such as the birth process, falls, auto accidents, stress etc.

Dr. Palmer conducted studies in Germany on cadavers and found that the brain stem or medulla, extended into the neural canal down to the level of the lamina of the second cervical vertebrae, at which point it becomes the spinal cord extending downward. The brain stem has been referred to as "Houston Control". It is the area where nerve cell centers are located that control many of the major functions of the body such as heart beat, respiration, digestion, elimination, our heating and cooling mechanism, constriction and dilation of the veins and arteries, muscle coordination, etc. Most of the functions of the body that we don't have to consciously think about are controlled at the brain stem level.

The brain stem at the level of the atlas vertebrae consists of approximately ten billion nerve fibers sending messages through the spinal cord to the cells of the body and from the cells back to the brain. These nerve fibers are arranged in small bundles called nerve tracts. These nerve tracts are either sensory or motor. The sensory nerves allow us function of the organs and systems while moving the body about its environment, via the musculoskeletal system. Gray's Anatomy states, "The nervous system is the master system of the body controlling and coordinating all the functions of the body and relating the individual to his environment."

The atlas and axis are the only vertebrae in proximity to the brain stem. When they misalign to the extent that they put pressure on the brain stem and or spinal cord they interfere with the vital messages being sent to and from the brain to all parts of the body. If for example the atlas is impinged against the part of the cord that sends messages to the left hand, that individual may experience a numbness, burning or tingling sensation in that hand. If the nerve tracts at the brain stem level go to the heart are being impinged that individual may experience high blood pressure, palpitations or an irregular heartbeat. Any part of the body can be affected when there is pressure on the brain stem or spinal cord because almost all of the nerves have to pass through this area before reaching the part of the body they innervate.

When a vertebrae misaligns to the extent that it interferes with nerve tissue and reduces the mental impulses it is termed a subluxation. A subluxation may be present for months or years before producing any outward signs such as pain or symptoms, causing the body to break down to a state of diseases

The purpose of the Blair Chiropractic technique is not to diagnose or treat diseases or conditions, but to analyze and correct vertebral subluxations in an accurate, precise and specific manner to allow the body's intelligence, (see chiropractic philosophy) to mend, repair and maintain health from within.

The Blair technique utilizes neurological tests, heat sensitive instrumentation and other means for detecting when the vertebral subluxation is present or absent. The adjustment is administered only when nerve pressure is present. The Blair technique utilizes precise x-rays of the upper cervical area to determine which way the vertebrae has misaligned so that a precise and specific adjustment may be tailored and administered to that individual.