



Does Spinal Manipulation Fall Within Massage Therapists' Scope of Practice?

By Susan Epperly, B.A., L.M.T.I., C.M.T.

By following this link, you can view a quick slide show on WebMD.com, which goes over some myths regarding back pain:

[http://www.webmd.com/back-pain/slideshow-back-pain-myths?ecd=wnl\\_day\\_011110](http://www.webmd.com/back-pain/slideshow-back-pain-myths?ecd=wnl_day_011110)

I found this statement from the slide show to be interesting:

"The American College of Physicians and American Pain Society guidelines for treatment of lower back pain recommend that patients and doctors consider spinal manipulation -- either by a chiropractor or a massage therapist -- for patients with back pain."

This comment may be confusing to some, because, of course, spinal manipulation or chiropractic adjustments are not within a Massage Therapist's scope of practice (at least here in the state of Texas).

However, when a Massage Therapist is able to relax and release tight, over-contracted, hypertonic muscles, the bones to which those muscles attach are often free to return to their "natural" position on their own.

Essentially, soft tissue manipulation (which is very much within Texas MTs' scope of practice) can facilitate passive and / or spontaneous chiropractic adjustments. MTs do not "put" or "force" the bones back into place, but rather "allow" or "facilitate" the bones' finding their way back into place by affecting and balancing muscle tonicity and / or flaccidity.

While sudden, high-velocity chiropractic adjustments (wherein the bones are "put" or "forced" back into place) are sometimes warranted, many clients find Massage Therapists' gentler, less forcible approach to spinal manipulation to be more comfortable and less anxiety-producing.

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