



# Halifax Chiropractic Clinic

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## ANOTHER SUMMER IS GONE!

by Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC

The leaves will soon be changing colour. The evenings are cooler and the days are getting shorter. Hopefully this year we will not start the Fall with another "Juan"!

This is the time of year for planning a few things:

- " Fall Clean-up.
- " Your fitness program

### FALL CLEAN-UP

Get a head start on the lawn and garden clean-up. It is much easier to look after things in the yard when it is warm. There is also less chance of sustaining an injury when it's warm. But - - that does not mean you cannot forget to warm up and keep yourself well hydrated (in other words drink ample amounts of water when working outside).

Be sure to pace yourself and do not try to clear the whole yard in one afternoon! Attempting to do so can cause increased stress on your heart and lungs as well as your back, shoulders, hips and knees.

If you injure yourself, please stop the activity, apply ice and rest. Ice 15 to 20 minutes; three or four times a day on the injured area. If you do not have an ice pack (made of soft gel) you can use a hot water bottle and fill it with a mixture of 50% water and 50% antifreeze or windshield washer fluid. It will stay relatively soft while in the freezer but provides an excellent source of cold. A bag of frozen peas or frozen corn also works well and will conform well to the body.

If the pain is limiting your daily activity level, then be sure to consult with your health care professional.

Quite often the back pain associated with Fall cleanup is a result of over exertion (lifting an object that is much too heavy) or overuse (lifting or doing something too many times). In the Fall, raking is probably one of the most common 'over use' injury and lifting heavy bags of wet leaves can certainly cause you to 'over exert' your back muscles.

Over exertion or overuse can cause what is referred to as mechanical back pain. This can involve restrictions or a lack of movement of the joints in the spine. This in turn can cause irritation of the joint tissue (ligaments, joint capsule, muscles) which can cause pain.

Chiropractors examine and treat patients who are suffering from mechanical back pain everyday. This is very common --- it is estimated that up to 95% of back pain is this type of problem. After examining your back and determining if additional investigations are needed (such as x-rays) your chiropractor will discuss the treatment options with you. This may include spinal adjustments or specific chiropractic manipulation techniques. The adjustment is a manual technique designed to improve and restore motion to the joints in your neck and back. Peripheral joints can also be affected by an injury and may be able to be treated with adjustment techniques.

### GETTING BACK TO FITNESS

In many cases, your chiropractor will select or design a series of rehabilitation exercises to strengthen, stretch and correct imbalances of your neck and back muscles.

If you are not having any significant problems, see your chiropractor for a check-up. Getting started on your exercises again, if you have "slacked off", is a good idea or ask your chiropractor for a program to get started on.

Try to be consistent with your exercises - - whatever this may be. Interestingly, only 20% of patients generally continue with their exercises beyond a period of six months. Please - - do not become one of "them"!



Walking is a good way to get physically active; it can be good for your heart, lungs, circulation and weight control/ loss.

There are lots of other options for exercising as well:

" Elder aerobics- Many of your local fitness centres have different types of programs for the older age group.

" Aqua exercise - This can either be in the shallow end or in deeper water with a water vest.

" Light weight training - Weight training with older patients can be good in an effort to help restore proper muscle tone, as well as to offset some of the effects of osteoporosis.

Just remember one thing - - the most important thing - - is to do something!

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Halifax Chiropractic Clinic  
6112 Willow Street  
Halifax, NS B3K 1M2  
Ph: 1 902 423-9223  
Fax: 1 902 423-9666