

## CONDITIONS WE TREAT – HIP PROBLEMS

### THE FOOT, ANKLE, KNEE, HIP AND BACK MUST WORK TOGETHER IN SMOOTH SYNCHRONY TO PREVENT PAIN

Have you ever heard the old song that goes, 'The leg bones connected to knee bone, the knee bone connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bones connected to the hip bone...!', and so on? Bones and joints from the foot to the spine do not function independently of one another but all rely on the smooth function of one another to work properly and stay healthy.

People don't have repeated strains of a body part for no reason. Something about the mechanics of the area creates strain. If we find and correct the strain we stop the pain. If we don't we wear out. Often at a very early age. Mechanical and postural problems with any area in the foot, leg, hip or back will alter the way we bear our own weight and the way we move producing continued stress in a problem area and creating strain and new problems in related areas. Conditions like flat feet, ankle pronation (inturning of the ankle while standing), bow or knock knees, abnormal stride, leg length difference, pelvic or spinal tilt or locking, weak or asymmetric muscle strength, loss of flexibility and a host of other problems may disrupt the normal chain of function of the back and lower extremities producing strain, pain and arthritis.



By diagnosing and correcting underlying postural defects one can begin to correct long standing pain and deformity. Correcting such problems at the earliest possible time, even in childhood, can prevent chronic pain, continued degeneration and possibly the need for surgery somewhere down the road. Such work is my specialty.

In the "Knee Book" orthopedic knee surgeon Dr. Howard Kiernan states, "in addition to repeated injury to the knee, the 2nd major cause of degenerative arthritis is misalignment of the knee. Most people are born with straight legs and their weight carried equally on both sides of the knee. However, if you have bowed legs or knocked knees the weight is loaded too much on one side of the knee. This is like riding on a tire that is out of alignment, the tread on one side will wear down and the tire will have a much shorter life span than the manufacturer has advertised. Most people who have their knees replaced are not ex-football players, but rather people who were born with bowed legs or knock-knees. Just because you were born with legs that are not straight, does not mean that you will not develop degenerative arthritis. As we all get older, however, our muscular co-ordination and balance begin to fail and then one side or the other of the knee begins to bear a disproportionate share of the load. Therefore, we associated degenerative arthritis or osteoarthritis with old age. Actually, it is a result of faulty load bearing, not age. Since we know that postural considerations of the ankle foot and lower extremities

can greatly stress all the joints in the foot, leg and even lower back, great attention to biomechanical faults in correcting these disorders is extremely important."

Orthotics, individualized exercise programs, spinal and extremity adjustments, therapy and many other forms of care can address and correct many mechanical problems before they get out of hand.

We treat the following conditions when associated with functional problems of the lower back.

### **ACUTE HIP PAIN**

Most acute hip pain relates to injury. The commonest injury of course is strain which usually involves a tissue tear. (One however cannot rule out a slipped bone cap in children and fracture in the elderly. Both conditions when suspected require x-ray and this we routinely do.) We provide expert care for hip conditions and referral when needed. (See the section on MUSCLE TEARS)

### **CHRONIC HIP PAIN**

Chronic hip strains are usually followed by hip degeneration and arthritis. The reason for this is simple. People don't have repeated strains of a body part for no reason. Something about the mechanics of the area creates strain. If we find and correct the strain we stop the pain. If we don't we wear out. Often at a very early age. Such strains and eventual wearing of the hip joint are most often due to a short leg, abnormal posture of the lower extremities or other factors. If one imagines the human body as a complex machine it is easy to see abnormal mechanics creates abnormal wear.

If one can diagnose, understand and treat postural deformities at their earliest possible stage, one can decrease the ultimate deterioration and problems that will ensue to the hip joint. Therefore, one can see that the earlier the intervention the better.

Children commonly experience unleveling of the spine. Scoliosis may result due to a short leg or tilted pelvis. Persistent hip problems or strain may also result even at a young age. Therefore children, adults and even seniors may benefit greatly from care and correction of these abnormalities. Correction can stop wear and tear and prevent the need of surgery at a later date.