JENNA HOWE & ASSOCIATES
Osteopathy and Concussion Recovery

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NEWSLETTER

Your Resource for a Healthy Lifestyle



DOES STRESS CAUSE NECK PAIN?

Does stress cause neck pain? The short answer is no! At Jenna Howe & Associates, we like to say "contributes to" instead of "cause." The casual way healthcare professionals throw around terms can lead to confusion and, worse still, ineffective treatment. Fortunately, our osteopathic therapist can help determine the root cause of your neck pain–and then help you find relief!

Let's discuss Nicole, a 40-something-year-old working mother of three. Nicole was used to being very active, balancing her work schedule with getting her kids to all the various activities and school functions that come with being a mom nowadays.

Her neck pain first started as a crick in the neck when she woke up one morning. As the day progressed from driving her kids around to sitting at her desk, she noticed turning her head became more difficult and painful, making focusing on work nearly impossible.

Nicole struggled to figure out why her neck started hurting and came to the conclusion that stress "must be" the culprit. The more pain and difficulty moving she had, the more convinced she was that stress was to blame.

Understanding Nicole's Neck Pain

Nicole first noticed her pain in the morning, right after waking up. As her day progressed, her pain got worse, which is why she assumed stress must be to blame. But remember the first sign of her issue was in the morning when she woke up, before she had a chance to experience stress.

In reality, Nicole's posture, specifically how she held her neck, seems to have contributed to her pain. Prolonged sitting can lead to a forward head position, resulting in tension to soft tissue (i.e., muscles, tendons, and ligaments) or negative changes to our blood flow.

The muscles of our neck function best when we move them. So, holding her head in one position likely led to irritation of the muscles and affected her ability to move her neck, which in turn caused stress.

Stress "contributes" to neck pain because, when we experience stress, our bodies naturally respond by tensing up as a protective measure. This tension can lead to discomfort, particularly in the neck and upper back region. Research studies have found that individuals with higher stress levels reported increased neck pain as compared to those with lower stress levels. This is why we say stress "contributes" to, but is not the cause of, neck pain.

How Osteopathic Manual Therapy Can Help Alleviate Neck Pain

We'll target the source of your pain by performing a thorough examination, starting with your medical history and details about how, when, and where your symptoms began. As we saw with Nicole, determining how, when, and why the pain started helps us eliminate possibilities and get to the actual root cause(s).

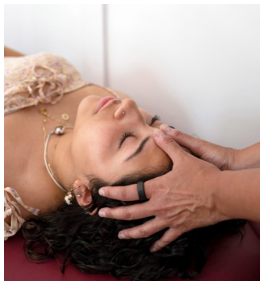
Our therapists will also analyze your posture and movement to identify any limitations or restrictions contributing to your condition. We'll use this information to design a program that addresses your specific needs.

Our treatment plans focus on relieving your pain, improving your posture, mobility, strength, etc., and educating you about managing your symptoms. Your program will likely include manual therapy techniques like soft tissue work and/or joint mobilizations, targeted stretches, exercises, activity modification, or posture recommendations.

We'll listen to your unique situation and specific issues and then work to help you find relief and get back to your normal routine.

Book Your Appointment Today!

If you're dealing with neck pain or looking for someone to help you figure out what is causing your issues, call us today and set up a consultation!



Sources: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1836955320301417?via%3Dihub; https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36180150/; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2270377/; https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28972599/

Service Spotlight:

CRANIOSACRAL MASSAGE THERAPY

CranioSacral Therapy (CST) is a gentle, hands-on form of manual therapy that focuses on evaluating and enhancing the craniosacral system of the body. The craniosacral system is made up of membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds and protects your brain and spinal cord.

This impressive form of therapy was created by osteopathic physician John E. Upledger after several extensive scientific studies from the years of 1975-1983. With CST, an osteopathic manual therapist uses gentle pressure to release pain and tensions deep in the body and regulate the flow of cerebrospinal fluid. In fact, the touch is so gentle, that the pressure is typically no more than 5 grams — roughly the weight of a nickel. This makes CST ideal for those living with severe conditions that leave them feeling constantly uncomfortable.

CranioSacral Therapy can be used to treat a vast array of pain and discomfort. It works by normalizing the environment around the brain and spinal cord, which enhances the body's natural ability to heal and self-correct. Therefore, this technique can be used to treat both acute and chronic pain alike. Whether you are recovering from a sports injury, surgical procedure, chronic arthritis, stroke, or neurological impairment, CST may be a benefit to you.

If you are interested in learning more about CranioSacral Therapy and how it can benefit you or a loved one in need, contact Jenna Howe today to schedule a consultation.

Separating Muscle and Joint Pain:

THE KEY TO LASTING RESULTS

Do you notice tightness in your upper back and neck? Is it more tight on one side than that on the other? The location and characteristics of your neck pain are valuable clues for our skilled therapists at Jenna Howe & Associates to identify the likely culprit for your pain, which helps us guide you to lasting relief.

Neck Pain: Muscle vs. Joint

It can be difficult for people to determine where their pain originates. One of the most common reasons people describe their pain is "no apparent reason." It often seems to come out of the blue or while doing the same everyday things you usually do.

You can use these clues to point you in the right direction:

- **Pain on one side = joint pain.** Although this, and all other clues, is not 100% true, it is a good starting point. Muscle tension tends to be equally distributed, whereas joint pain is typically one-sided.
- **Difficulty or inability to turn = joint dysfunction.** Muscle tension tends to make movement uncomfortable or to feel tight on the opposite side of where you're turning towards (pain on the left when turning right). Joint dysfunction usually causes the inability to turn or the sensation of a blockage when turning to the same side as the pain (pain on the right when turning right).
- **Pain that travels = joint.** Muscles tend to feel tight and sore in the muscles themselves, compared to joint pain, which travels from the source of pain up into the head or down into the shoulder and arm.

These clues can help us determine what is causing your pain, but the best way to get lasting relief is to schedule an appointment with one of our therapists!



Slow Cooker White Chicken Chili

- 1 1/4 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts (2-3 breasts)
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 2 (15-oz) cans reduced-sodium white beans such as white kidney, navy, cannellini, or Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 (4.5-ounce) cans diced green chiles
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1 small yellow onion (or 1/2 large) finely diced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Fresh lime wedges

Place chicken in the bottom of a 6-quart or larger slow cooker. Add the chicken broth, white beans, green chiles, garlic, onion, cumin, oregano, salt, and cayenne. Stir to combine. Cover and cook on low for 4 to 6 hours or high for 2 to 4 hours, or until the chicken is cooked through. Remove the chicken breasts to a plate. Once cool enough to handle, shred and set aside.

With an immersion blender, puree a portion of the chili to thicken it, leaving some of the beans whole. (If you don't have an immersion blender, you can instead transfer a few ladlefuls of the chili to a food processor or blender and pulse roughly, then return back into the chili.)

Stir in the shredded chicken and cilantro. Portion into bowls and top with a squeeze of fresh lime juice. Add any other desired toppings and enjoy.

https://www.wellplated.com/crockpot-white-chicken-chili/

NEW PROGRAM!

The Vibrant Woman Project

I am so excited to introduce to you The Vibrant Woman Project! This 90-day self-directed wellness coaching program is designed for women who want to get back to feeling their VIBRANT and RADIANT selves — mind, body and soul!

Over 12 lessons you will explore topics including nutrition, mindset, movement, sleep and recovery.

The cost is $129 CAN and you can access the content at your own pace. The course opens January 8.

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REVIEWS



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