

VAN DAM CHIROPRACTIC

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August 2026

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CHIROPRACTIC & BACK TO SCHOOL: SETTING KIDS UP RIGHT

The Season Nobody Thinks to Check the Spine

Back to school means new shoes, new supplies, and for most families, zero thought given to the spine. That is understandable. Spinal health rarely makes the back-to-school checklist. But August is actually one of the most important times of year to have a child's spine assessed, because the physical demands that come with a new school year- heavy backpacks, hours at a desk, sport season starting up, and the postural habits that form around all of it- accumulate fast.

Children's spines are not miniature adult spines. They are actively developing, which means the habits and stresses they are exposed to during growth years have a longer window to shape the outcome. A spinal restriction that causes a 40-year-old mild discomfort can alter movement patterns, muscle development, and postural norms in a growing child in ways that take years to become visible.

The Backpack Problem Is Real

Research has consistently linked heavy backpack loads to spinal pain, postural changes, and altered gait in school-aged children. A study published in the Journal of School Health found that children carrying backpacks exceeding 10 percent of their body weight showed measurable changes in spinal curvature and reported significantly higher rates of back and neck pain than those carrying lighter loads.(1)

The recommendations are straightforward: backpacks should be worn with both straps,

positioned high on the back rather than hanging low, and kept under the 10 percent body weight threshold. Rolling backpacks eliminate the load entirely for kids with significant commutes. None of these solutions are complicated. They just require someone paying attention.

Why a Chiropractic Check Up Makes Sense

A chiropractic assessment at the start of the school year does for the spine what a dental checkup does for teeth. It identifies small issues before they become established patterns. Chiropractors trained in pediatric care assess spinal alignment, movement quality, and postural habits in ways that a standard pediatric visit simply does not. Many of the spinal issues adults present with in their thirties and forties trace back to unaddressed restrictions that developed during school years and were never caught.

Starting the year with a clear picture of where a child's spine stands is a practical, proactive investment in their long-term health. August is the right time to make that call.



SNACK-SIZED WORKOUTS: THE SCIENCE BEHIND, SHORTER-FREQUENT WORKOUTS

The All or Nothing Trap

For decades, the default message around exercise was go long or go home. Thirty minutes minimum. Sixty is better. Miss a session and the week is lost. That framing worked for some people and completely failed everyone else, which turns out to be the majority. The all-or-nothing approach to exercise is one of the primary reasons most adults do not meet basic physical activity guidelines despite genuinely wanting to.

The emerging research on exercise snacking, short bouts of movement distributed across the day rather than consolidated into a single session, challenges that framing in ways that are both practical and genuinely exciting. The body does not require a minimum session length to derive meaningful benefit. It requires movement, repeatedly, across the hours it is awake. That is a very different prescription, and for most people it is a far more achievable one.

What the Research Shows

A study published in the journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* found that three ten-minute bouts of brisk walking distributed across the day produced equivalent improvements in cardiovascular fitness, blood pressure, and blood sugar regulation compared to a single continuous thirty-minute walk.⁽²⁾ Same total volume, same physiological outcome, completely different structure. For anyone who genuinely cannot carve out thirty consecutive minutes, that finding removes the primary excuse for inactivity.

Exercise snacks do not have to be walks. Ten bodyweight squats every hour at a standing desk. A two-minute set of push-ups between meetings. A brief stair climb before lunch. A five-minute mobility sequence in the evening.



A brief stair climb before lunch. A five-minute mobility sequence in the evening. Each of these interrupts the metabolic stagnation that prolonged sitting creates, stimulates muscle contraction, drives blood sugar into working muscle, and adds up to a meaningful daily movement total by the end of the day.

Prolonged sitting is now understood to be an independent health risk, separate from whether a person exercises at other times. Breaking it up every 45 to 60 minutes with even brief movement meaningfully reduces that risk.

The Spine Benefits Too

From a chiropractic perspective, exercise snacking is particularly valuable. The spine does not do well with sustained static loading, which is exactly what sitting for hours produces. Brief movement breaks restore circulation to spinal discs, reduce compressive load on facet joints, and interrupt the muscular guarding patterns that build up across a sedentary workday.

Patients who build movement into the structure of their day rather than reserving it for a single session tend to arrive at their adjustments with less accumulated tension and hold their corrections longer. Small and frequent turns out to be a genuinely effective strategy.

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VOTING ENDS SEPT 29!

RESEARCH AND CHIROPRACTIC

There seems to be no end to the conditions that respond to chiropractic care – physical as well as psychological conditions.

That is because chiropractic does not “treat” a particular condition. Chiropractic care “treats” or more accurately “corrects” a serious interference to brain, nervous system and energy function known as the subluxation.

No matter what condition you or a loved one may have, you will always function better when free from subluxations.

*Chiropractors are uniquely trained to locate and correct subluxations. Enjoy this month's cases and
SEE MORE NEXT MONTH.*



Chiropractic Care & Children's Behavioral Health

Most parents bringing a child to a chiropractor are thinking about posture, backpack strain, or a sports injury. What they are often not expecting is an improvement in focus, sleep, and behavior. A study published in Clinical Chiropractic(3) followed children with attention and behavioral challenges who received chiropractic care alongside standard care and found measurable improvements in all three areas compared to those receiving standard care alone. The nervous system connection makes sense when you think about it. A restricted spine sends distorted signals to a brain that is still developing and learning to regulate itself. Removing that interference does not just affect the back. It affects everything the nervous system is responsible for, which in a growing child is quite a lot. For parents who feel like they have tried everything, adding chiropractic to the picture is a low-risk, evidence-supported step worth taking seriously.



Regular Chiropractic Care & Healthy Aging

Getting older does not have to mean steadily losing ground. Research(4) following adults over 65 who received regular chiropractic care found they reported significantly better overall health, greater mobility, and fewer falls compared to age-matched peers not receiving chiropractic care, with those benefits compounding the longer care continued. That last detail matters. This was not a short-term effect that faded. It grew over time. Falls are one of the leading causes of serious injury and loss of independence in older adults, and anything that meaningfully reduces that risk deserves attention. The spine is the communication highway between the brain and the body, and keeping it moving well keeps the nervous system sharp, the muscles responsive, and the balance system accurate. Regular chiropractic care is not just about feeling better today. For older adults, it is an investment in staying capable and independent for years to come.

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