

Correction of leg length helps the spine

Question: Does the equal length of my legs play a role in the balance of my spine?

Answer: Most Chiropractors utilize a leg check to start their evaluation of your postural bio-mechanics. The leg length can reveal imbalances in many structures from the head to the feet. One of the diagnostic steps in determining if an appropriate correction was made during your treatment is to measure as to whether the legs that were uneven initially corrected to an even length. Many factors play a role in this type of diagnostic approach.

A congenital leg-length deficiency can stem from multiple causes. Polio or infections such as Leg Calf Perthes Disease, which occur at birth, can affect growth plates on one side creating a lack of development in the hip or leg bones resulting in a congenital short leg. A severe trauma to the hips spine or legs can permanently change leg length through damage to tissues surrounding the lower torso joints. A post-surgical prosthesis mending a bone or damaged joint can also result in a leg-length deficiency. A true leg-length deficiency should be measured on X-ray as well as using two fixed positions on the hip and ankle.

A research paper conducted by Kakushima, M, et al. published in *Spine* magazine stated that patients who have leg-length discrepancy due to disorders in the lower extremities are at a greater risk of developing disabling spinal disorders due to exaggerated degenerative change. Therefore, treatment for leg-length discrepancy may be helpful in preventing degenerative spinal changes.

Treatment of permanent deficiencies may be the application of a lift or an orthotic in the shoe. In extreme cases the shoe may be built up on the outside. Should you have back pain, a visit to your Chiropractor would help determine the solution.

Quote of the week: *“It is our choices ... that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.”* -- J.K. Rowling