

In attendance: chiropractor Robert Cowin, DC  
Chiropractic Assistant: Julie Ivanovska

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## MY RESTLESS NECK Spasmodic torticollis



Mrs Jan Groves, Gwynneville

I first consulted the Cowin and Bras chiropractic practice in 1986, suffering from a severe neck problem, sometimes called "**spasmodic torticollis**", which caused my head continually to turn to the left and then back to centre.

I couldn't turn it to the right at all.

My head was never still.

It seemed that I could get little rest. By day, the unceasing movement meant that I was exhausted from trying to hold my head up, it felt so heavy. By night, I was unable to stay in one position in bed and took a long time to get to sleep.

I had bad headaches as well.

I had previously consulted two other chiropractors, one of whom said that there was nothing wrong with me, that it was just a nervous habit. The other said that I had a neurological problem, which he did not know how to help.

Naturally it was a relief to meet Drs Robert Cowin and Kathleen Bras who said that help may be available.

**It was very difficult to take the first X-rays as I was unable to hold my head still for even a second. Any**

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## NAGGING HELPED NAGGING BACK PAIN Lower-back and abdominal pains



Mr Murray Gardner, Keiraville

My problems have been around for about fifty-eight of my 65 years. They were caused, I think, by a fall on my head at about age 7. It hurt a lot and I can still remember it vividly.

I was told: "Come on, get up! You'll be right".

But I wasn't.

A friend of 15 years had been suggesting (nagging) for about that long that I should go and see her chiropractor.

Eventually, I did. That stopped the nagging for a little while but about three months after the first visit to the chiropractor my friend's nagging came back, in a different form: "**I told you so**".

My improvements are as follows (and, I've got to admit, pretty much as predicted)

**LOW-BACK PAIN:** My back's the best it's ever been. When soreness comes it can be eliminated temporarily by Chinese Pillow session.

**NECK NOISY AND STIFF:** The crunching noise has gone completely from the neck. Stiffness of the neck has decreased by 50 to 75%.

**UNSTEADINESS:** No more stumbling – it wasn't alcohol or uneven footpaths after all.

**KNEES PAIN:** Knees still give way occasionally but I lie on Chinese pillow for 15 minutes and the problem is solved.

**TINNITUS:** Tinnitus has decreased about 10 to 15%.

**SINUSITIS:** Sinusitis has improved.

Life has improved greatly

Murray Gardner

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**attempt to do so caused my neck to vibrate with the effort**, but eventually X-rays were taken and showed that bones in my neck appeared to be out of line. For example, the atlas, the top bone of the spine, was angled 7½° away from the (horizontal) skull joints above it.

Immediately after the first adjustment the pain at the top of my neck went from about “5” severity to a “2”, I could move my neck further, and, later, I was a little more comfortable on the Chinese Pillow. That night I had a better sleep. Follow-up X-rays taken straight after that adjustment showed that the atlas-skull angle apparently was reduced to 5¾°

In the weeks that followed, my neck continued to “swivel” somewhat, but it was easier to control and it was bliss to have relaxed shoulders and the exhausting neck pains gone. Over the years since, the swiveling has continued mildly, but is more under my control and simple things like sitting, standing and driving have become easier.

For example, seventeen years later, it was not difficult to sit still for update X-rays. Apparently they showed further improvement, with the atlas-skull angle at 4½°.

As well as the Chinese Pillow self-help procedure I was encouraged to learn how to do Feldenkrais “awareness-through-movement” exercise.

**I found this very difficult at first. There was so much neurological disruption in my body that it was hard for me to be still and quiet, and learn to make the small movements.** Even resting on the ‘Chinese pillow’ had been difficult, as I had no sense of rest and peace within my body.

However, I persevered with regular monthly chiropractic adjustments, the Chinese Pillow daily and “awareness-through-movement”, perhaps once or twice a month.

Today at age 68 I know that I have achieved a new sense of peace and rest within my body and mind. I rarely have a headache and the lower back pain from which I also suffered has gone. I can even turn my head to the right. I simply do not know where I would be today without the help that I have received from the Cowin & Bras practice.

Jan Groves

**Chiropractor’s comments:** *I admire Jan’s victory. In my view she has proved the usefulness of two helpful hints:*

- 1) *Chiropractor BJ Palmer’s: “Get the idea. All else follows”*
- 2) *Teacher Moshe Feldenkrais’: “It’s simple, but not easy”.*

*Further implications and applications of these helpful hints will be explored in other patients’ stories in future newsletters.*

*I also admire Jan’s gardening ability. When I asked her, in mid-winter, to bring in some flowers for the photograph, she arrived with seven varieties: Sunlit Rose, Snow Flake, Hellebore, Bergonia, Double Jonquil, Gerbera and Lachanalia.*

**“NAGGING HELPED” story: Chiropractor’s comments:** *Murray reports that though the fall onto his head happened 58 years earlier it hurt him badly and he still remembers it vividly. Many other patients also report long-term consequences of childhood trauma.*

*Though Murray’s main presenting problem was right low-back and right abdominal pain, I X-rayed only his neck. On a chiropractic line-drawing analysis (known as upper-cervical orthogonal<sup>1</sup>, not “Atlas Orthogonal”) five angular measurements suggested that the joints of the upper neck were misaligned. The so-called Total Deviation from Zero (TDZ)<sup>2</sup> was 5.13°. One of the five angles was measured at 3¼°. Though less than half the misalignment (side-slip) mentioned in Jan’s “My Restless Neck” story, a measurement of three or more degrees is regarded in this practice as large. After Murray’s first adjustment, follow-up X-rays indicated that this angle was 1¼° and the TDZ was 3.00° He thought his neck moved more freely. (This was confirmed by pre and post measurements with a CROM Instrument), that he was steadier (and seemed so to me on pre and post balance tests) and that the volume of his (mild) tinnitus had decreased.*

*Murray has been a patient here for seven months, has regular visits at two-month intervals and reports using the Chinese Pillow at least once a day and the self-help audiotape occasionally.*

<sup>1</sup> Owens EF. Line drawing analyses of static cervical X-ray used in chiropractic. *J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 1992; 15(7) 442-49.

<sup>2</sup> Aldis GK, Hill JM. Analysis of a chiropractor’s data. *Journal of Proceedings, Royal Society of New South Wales* 1979; 112-93-9. Reprinted in *J Manipulative Ther* 1980; 3: 177-93 and in *J Aust Chiropr Assoc* 1981; 12:8-14.

## CLINIC NEWS

**Holidays: The clinic will close on 22 December 2005 and reopen on 16 January 2006.**

Around August, 2006, Julie and I will be taking long-service leave for three months.

As that time approaches, stories and comments in our newsletter will be emphasizing self-help procedures so that you can get more benefit from the adjustments and so that you can self-correct the early stages of vertebral misalignment. Because some of our patients are themselves health professionals, my comments more frequently will include snippets of technical information that may be of little interest to most readers. So just ignore what bores and use what enthuses.

Our next issue will include off-beat on-beam self-help stories by Carolin Chapman, of Figtree (via The Rock) and Jo Hochberger, of Austinmer.

Please consider telling your story. Based on the reported responses to previous newsletter stories, I think you can be confident that your story will be read by someone who needs it badly and who will be encouraged by it to get well again.

Previous newsletters can be viewed online at [www.upcspine.com/cowin.htm](http://www.upcspine.com/cowin.htm) Also online are our illustrations of upper cervical orthogonal X-rays: [www.upcspine.com/tech1.htm](http://www.upcspine.com/tech1.htm) Also online are the beginnings of a website which some of you have volunteered to help us develop into a self-help resource for all neck-owners.

[www.geocities.com/cowinchiropracticclinic/](http://www.geocities.com/cowinchiropracticclinic/)

**Have a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.**