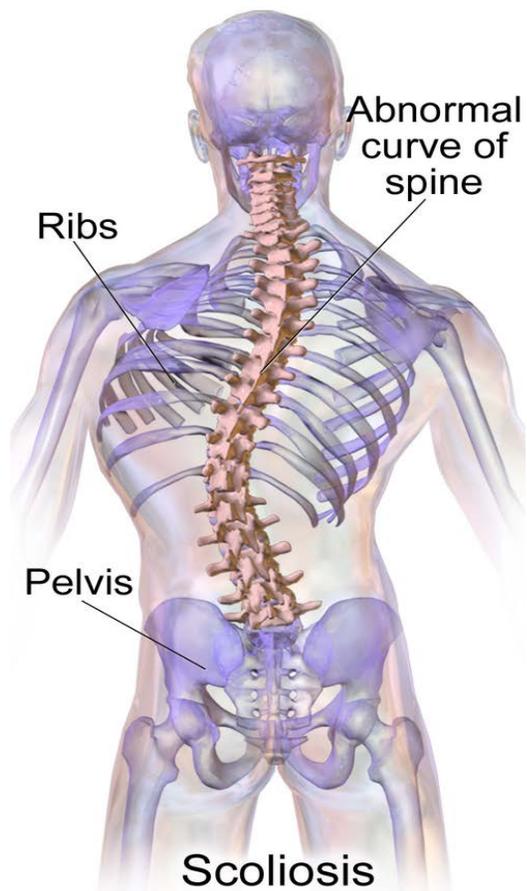


Effectiveness of Chiropractic Treatment for Scoliosis



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In this article we will cover...

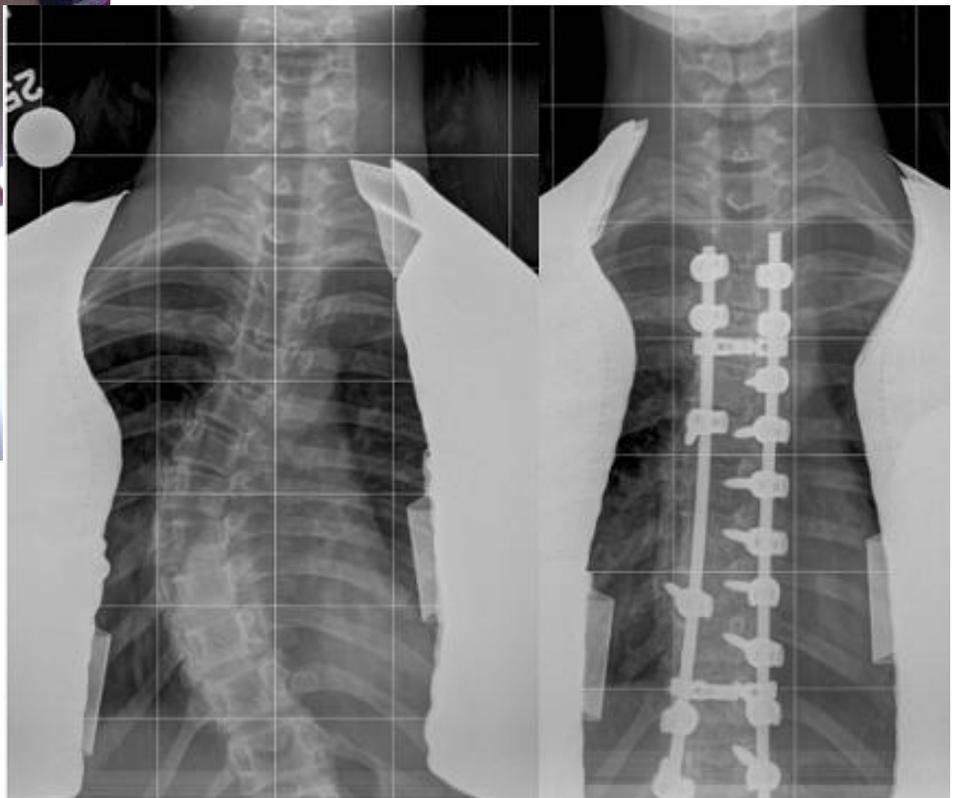
1. What scoliosis is,
2. Symptoms of scoliosis in adolescents,
3. The effectiveness of chiropractic treatment for scoliosis, and
4. The best chiropractic treatment plan for scoliosis

What Is Scoliosis?

Scoliosis is a side-way curvature of the spine that occurs most often during the growth spurts in young children. Up to 90% of scoliosis is labeled "idiopathic", which means they occur spontaneously and without identifiable cause. It is most common among females and as [Mayo Clinic](#) states: "most cases of scoliosis are mild but if severe, they can be disabling...".

In severe forms, scoliosis can cause both physical and emotional pain (due to deformed physical appearances), and may even lead to compromised heart and lung function due to their vicinity to the spine.

Scoliosis is clinically defined as a spinal curvature that exceeds more than 10 degrees (Cobb angle measurement) to the right or left from the center line. Once a scoliosis is noted, the most common medical practice is to leave it alone and monitor its progression by taking x-rays every 3 to 12 months intervals (**huge mistake**, more on this later). Depending on the severity and the rate of progression, scoliosis patients are normally faced with either of the three treatment methods: self-care, braces, or **surgery**.



Symptoms of Scoliosis in Adolescent

The high prevalence of scoliosis in younger adults and its tendency to worsen makes early detection imperative, if you wish to manage scoliosis successfully. Unfortunately, minor scoliosis do not present with obvious symptoms and can go unnoticed for a long time. In fact, pain or neurologic numbness are rarely present.

One of the most common tests for detecting scoliosis is called the Adam's Forward Bend Test. It's a simple test where the subject bends down from the waist as if touching the toes. The examiner stands behind the subject and observes for one or more of the following signs:

- Higher shoulder on one side
- Protruding shoulder blade on one side
- Higher rib cage than the other
- Prominent hip than the other
- Uneven waist
- Tilted body
- Leg length discrepancies

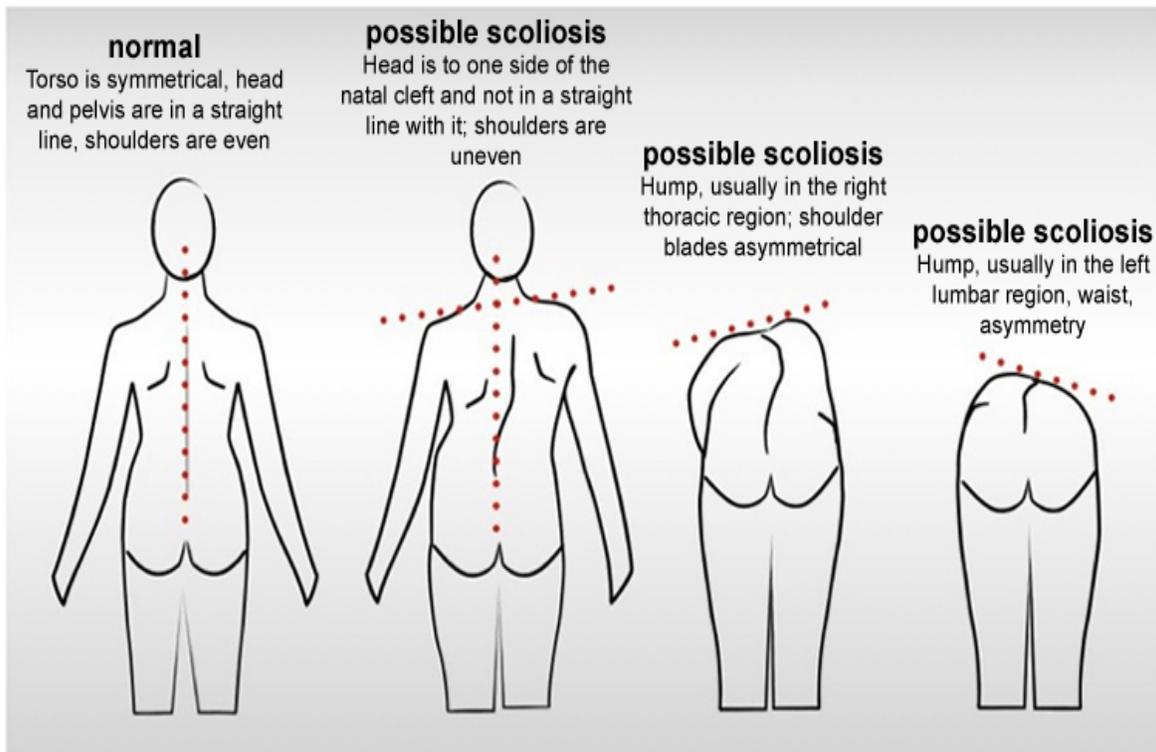
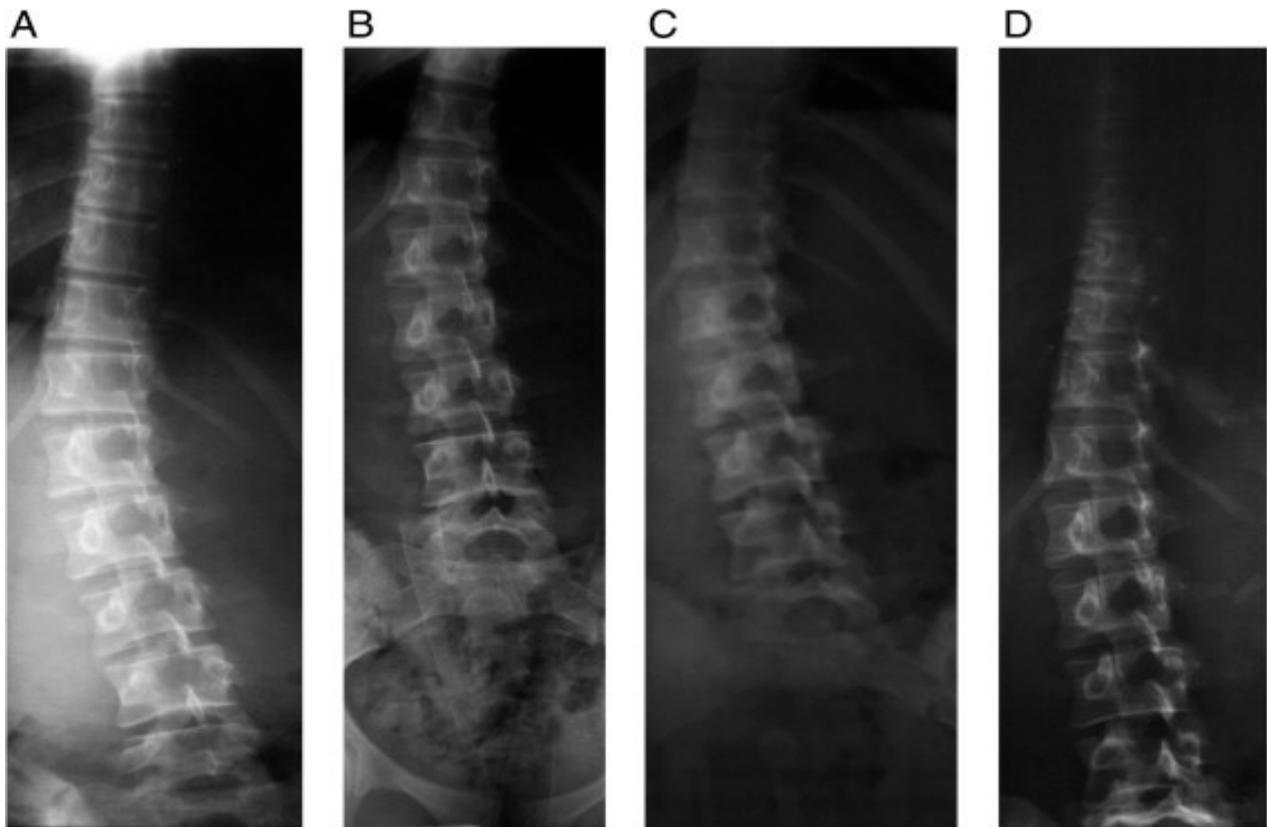


Image credit: [Orthopro](#)

Effectiveness of Chiropractic Treatment for Scoliosis

There are many different chiropractic treatment plans for scoliosis. But if you want to have a chance of improving the curvature of the spine without the use of surgery, I highly recommend chiropractors who practice the Gonstead technique of chiropractic. The goal of structural based chiropractic is to improve posture and spinal alignment with simultaneously providing patients with improved pain and functional outcomes.

There are countless [anecdotes](#) and case studies that suggest the effectiveness of chiropractic treatment for scoliosis. For example, a [study](#) published in 2011 revealed that "in long-term results, 22 out of the 28 patients benefited from improvements (reductions) in Cobb angle. Improvements in pain scores and disability ratings were recorded in all curvature types at 6 and 24 months."



A sample time line of a patient's progress during treatment. From left, the initial radiograph (A), stress radiograph (taken while wearing external weighting system to evaluate potential) (B), 6 months (C), and 24 months (D).

The true effectiveness of chiropractic for scoliosis is not in the act of reducing the curvatures itself, but lies in prevention. The medical profession does not offer any sort of treatment for spinal curves of less than 20 degrees, and oftentimes, they are left alone until the next check up. Given the fact that progressive scoliosis is disabling and that it's much easier to improve curvatures in younger subjects, it is my personal opinion that waiting to see if minor scoliosis worsens or not without action is foolish. In that note, chiropractic seems to be very favorable when it comes to managing scoliosis in adolescents.

Can yoga or swimming help with scoliosis?

If you are suffering from a *functional* scoliosis (scoliosis curvature that *disappears* during Adam's test), yes, general exercise such as yoga, pilates or swimming could help. Functional scoliosis normally occurs due to muscle spasms or leg length differences. In such cases treatment of the spine is deemed unnecessary. Most scoliosis cases are structural (scoliosis curvature that is visible or becomes prominent during Adam's test) and structural problems cannot be solved by general exercises such as yoga or swimming. They are great as they strengthen and stretch the muscles that hold the spine, but they do not fix the underlying problem.

Can Chiropractic Fix / Cure Scoliosis?

Numerous anecdotal evidences and case studies suggest that chiropractic treatment can indeed reduce – or in severe cases, at least stabilize - scoliosis. However, it is also true that the effectiveness of chiropractic treatment for scoliosis hasn't been researched on a larger scale. As a chiropractor myself, I strongly recommend chiropractic for anyone as a natural and safe alternative in managing scoliosis. Chiropractic is superior to virtually all other forms of treatment, and it promotes prevention and empowers individuals to live actively during treatment. At a minimum, do not helplessly and hopelessly wait to see if a case of scoliosis worsens over time. Spinal subluxation and the resulting degeneration is progressive by nature and will undoubtedly worsen over time.