



## THE GONSTEAD SYSTEM OF CHIROPRACTIC

{ Michael A. Pickens, D.C. }

# THE GONSTEAD SYSTEM AND THE FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE

Not all chiropractors use the Gonstead System. To become an advanced practitioner of this type of chiropractic care, Dr. Pickens went far beyond the basics taught in chiropractic schools. He had to attend numerous post graduate seminars, many of which were at the Gonstead Clinic in Wisconsin, and have years of experience and practice to become proficient.

Developed by Dr. Clarence Gonstead, this method of chiropractic care uses in-depth analysis and specific treatment approaches for adjusting each segment of the spine. Trained as a mechanical engineer before he began his chiropractic studies, Dr. Gonstead found the laws of physics could be applied to the spine and the rest of the skeleton, much like any other building structure.

From this insight, Dr. Gonstead developed his Foundation Principle, which says if the foundation of the skeleton – or more specifically the spine – is unbalanced, then the entire structure will be unstable. It's the same concept in buildings: if the foundation is weak, the integrity of the entire structure suffers.

So, if there's something wrong with your feet, eventually it will affect your knees. And if there is a problem with your knees, in time it will affect your hips and pelvis, which eventually will affect the whole spine above. In other words, the explanation for a why a condition such as scoliosis develops, is based on the foundation principle.

Another reason Dr. Pickens decided to learn the Gonstead approach is because it provided the best results for his own chronic neck condition:

*“After the Gonstead method dramatically relieved my own neck problems, I knew it would achieve the best results for my patients. That is why I have invested so much time to learn the method, and why I'm continually refining my treatment skills.”*

## HOW DR. PICKENS ANALYZES YOUR CONDITION

As a practitioner of the Gonstead System, Dr. Pickens follows one of the most logical and thorough methods for analyzing your spine. It involves five procedures to detect the presence of vertebral subluxations.

### 1. Visualization

The first thing Dr. Pickens will do is observe you as you sit, walk and move. What he's looking for are subtle changes in your posture and movement, which can indicate problems. For example, if there is a problem with your feet, it may affect all the joints above, including

the spine. So, careful observation will help Dr. Pickens analyze how your body is moving as a whole.

### 2. Instrumentation

Next, he'll check for the uneven distribution of heat along your spine, which can be a sign of inflammation and nerve irritation. To do this, Dr. Pickens uses a device called a Temp-O-Scope. Extremely sensitive, it detects minute changes in body temperature, which may be caused by subluxations and inflammation. When he guides it down your back, it will feel like a finger gliding along each side of your spine.

**Dr. Pickens' goal is to restore – and then help you maintain – your optimal health by correcting any irritations and interference caused by vertebral subluxations. He will take great care to ensure you receive the most accurate and painless adjustments possible.**

### 3. Static Palpation

With static palpation, Dr. Pickens touches (or palpates) the areas around your spine while you remain still (or static). It allows him to feel for abnormal tightness in your muscles, as well as swelling and tenderness, which are signs of inflammation.

### 4. Motion Palpation

This time, as he palpates your spine, Dr. Pickens will have you move and bend at various angles. This helps him determine how well each segment of your spine moves in different directions. He'll feel each individual vertebra's movement to see if any there's any loss of normal movement or fixation.

### 5. X-Ray Analysis

X-rays provide a visual of the entire structure of your spine. This is helpful in evaluating for disease, fracture, joint and disc integrity, as well as, posture and any vertebral misalignments. X-rays are not used to find subluxations, but are an aid in showing what has happened to your spine over time. They may help locate potential subluxations, but primarily X-rays are used to determine the best way to correct a problem once it is found through the physical examination.

Finally, after thoroughly considering the results of all the analysis, Dr. Pickens will determine the proper course of treatment to improve your condition. Just as

every person is unique, so is each individual treatment program. Dr. Pickens' recommendations for your care will be individualized specifically for you.

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#### **YOUR CHIROPRACTIC TREATMENT PROCEDURES**

The chairs and tables in Dr. Pickens' treatment rooms were all developed or revolutionized by Dr. Gonstead. Each piece is specifically designed to either accommodate different body types, or to make the adjustment of particular parts of the spine more comfortable and effective.

When Dr. Pickens provides treatment, each adjustment should move only one vertebra at a time, which is very important for the best results. The Gonstead System does this extremely effectively.

During a proper Gonstead adjustment the “cracks” you hear are not due to several vertebrae moving. The multiple sounds are actually caused by the many joints associated with a single vertebra being released at one time. For instance, in the thoracic spine, each vertebra has 10 joints, many of which will release with a good adjustment.

Because no single approach will work well for every person, Dr. Gonstead developed several different approaches for adjusting each segment of the spine. This is why Dr. Pickens may use more than one table and a variety of positions to adjust one vertebra.

The most unique method developed by Dr. Gonstead is the neck adjustment, by far one of the most effective and safest ways to adjust the neck in chiropractic. Using the tip of his finger, Dr. Pickens can correct all directions of vertebral misalignment at one time. It has allowed him to help many patients who had chronic neck and arm pain that did not respond to other treatments. And there's almost no risk of injury to the disc or blood vessels in the neck.

The Gonstead neck adjustment is one of the most difficult treatment procedures to learn. In fact, it takes many years of study and practice to master. However, Dr. Pickens has dedicated the time to learn this procedure, because it can achieve the best results for his patients.

#### **THE REMARKABLE DR. C.S. GONSTEAD**

Before he became renowned as the “chiropractor's chiropractor,” Dr. Clarence S. Gonstead was a chiropractic patient himself. At age 19, Dr. Gonstead suffered a painful, crippling episode of rheumatoid arthritis. After conventional treatments failed, he finally found relief through intensive chiropractic adjustments. Within a few days he was able to get out of bed, and after a couple of years of regular adjustments, he was completely cured.

That personal experience made Dr. Gonstead later decide to help others through chiropractic care. Using his background as a mechanical engineer, he conducted extensive research on the human skeletal structure. This led to the development of the Gonstead System, a unique approach for analyzing and treating the spine.

Dr. Gonstead strongly believed the vast majority of illnesses were caused by pressure on one or more of the nerves that exited the spine. And his results were remarkable. A dedicated “workaholic,” he treated over 1 million patients in his lifetime (1923-1978). They came all hours of the day and into the night, from all over the country and from other countries, to be treated by this “miracle worker”, Dr. Gonstead.

In 1964, he built the 19,000-square-foot Gonstead Clinic in Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin. In addition, a hotel was built and attached to the Clinic, and a small plane landing strip built next to his home to accommodate distant patients. Today, Dr. Gonstead's advanced techniques are still taught there to doctors of chiropractic from throughout the world.