

**Segmental Dysfunction** – a motion segment (joint) in which alignment, movement integrity, and/or physiologic function are altered although the contact between the joint surfaces remains intact.

**Synonyms:** segmental restriction, subluxation (chiropractic), somatic dysfunction, joint dysfunction.

**Symptoms** typically include pain and/or tenderness at the level of the motion segment (joint) that is dysfunctional. Changes in the surrounding musculature, such as hypertonicity (tightness) may be present as well. Causes of joint dysfunction are acute injury, repetitive use injury, muscular imbalance, and/or poor posture.

**How is it diagnosed?**

Patient history and physical examination can lead towards the diagnosis of segmental dysfunction. The acronym P.A.R.T. is used during the examination process to determine which joints to treat..

Pain/tenderness, Asymmetry, Range of motion restriction, and Tone/tissue abnormalities.

**How is it treated?**

Chiropractors use manipulation (also called an 'adjustment') to treat segmental dysfunctions. An adjustment is a manual procedure that involves a directed thrust to move a joint past the physiological range of motion, without exceeding its anatomical limit. Adjustments can restore joint alignment, increase motion, and reduce pain.

Modalities such as ice, electrical muscle stimulation, ultrasound, massage, home stretches/exercises and various forms of manual therapy may be used as an adjunct to manipulation to reduce pain further.

**Alternative treatments.**

NSAID's, muscle relaxants.

**Prognosis** is excellent.

**Duration of care:** 2 to 3 sessions per week for 2 to 3 weeks (4 to 9 visits).