



JOINT WORK

BY SHANNON MARTIN

Herman Szeto splits his time between Shanghai and Hong Kong. He grew up in Canada and studied at Life Chiropractic College West in California, where he received his Doctor of Chiropractic degree. Herman's parents are from Hong Kong and with his international background he's been able to form a unique practice, helping patients at Shanghai's Body & Soul – Medical Clinics and in his private practice with two locations in Hong Kong. Chiropractic is relatively unknown in China, and Herman finds that many patients who underwent treatment in the U.S. or Canada do not realize they can find a chiropractor in Shanghai.

“Chiropractors deal with the joints and help them to work the way they should. Every joint has a normal range of motion. When a patient experiences limited range of motion and related pain, we help to get the joints working properly again.” This includes soft tissue work, stretching and joint manipulation (also known as “adjustment”). With simple exercises to “work the joint”, blood flow is increased, bringing oxygen to the cells and taking away waste.

Herman describes his typical patient's lifestyle, “They work 10 hours a day and often sit in a car for a long

commute. So they may be sitting 12 hours or more a day. They get little exercise and may have a poor diet. They are full of aches and pains.” In today's modern, high-tech world, even those who try to stay healthy with exercise and diet often suffer pain and overuse injuries.

The most common patient complaints are low back pain, neck and shoulder pain. Herman says neck and shoulder problems are on the rise as people spend more time on the computer. In recent years, thumb and hand issues are becoming as prevalent as the smart phones that cause them. His patients often realize they rarely put their phone down during the day.

Herman also creates custom orthotics for patients (he does the measuring and fitting and gets them produced in Hong Kong). When the feet are rolled in or out (overpronation or supination), it causes all kinds of issues like bunions, crimping of the toes, thickness of the skin and poor posture, back, knee and hip pain. Parents often notice these issues in their children, especially by the uneven wearing on their shoes. The inserts can prevent a lot of further issues and Herman's resources allow him to bring high quality orthotics to Shanghai residents for the first time ever.

No matter what your lifestyle here in Shanghai, Herman offers some simple tips that can help keep pain at bay:

- Get some exercise every day. A 30-minute walk is enough to help your body recover and keep from getting stiff.
- Every 30 minutes, take 30 seconds to get up from your seat. The best thing to do is simply stand, move around a bit and look out a window in to the distance. This relaxes the body, gets the blood flowing and also rests the eyes.
- Try to stretch or move briefly in the opposite direction of your regular position (so, for example, if you are constantly using the computer mouse with your right arm, stretch that arm behind your back or rotate the shoulder).
- Consider ways to break patterns or minimize overuse (Herman knows patients aren't likely to give up their phone addictions anytime soon, but he says many of them gain a greater realization of their usage as they discuss their routines and can cut back). 📱

Shannon Martin has been living in Shanghai for almost a year since relocating from the U.S. with her husband. She manages communications and outreach for two eldercare companies in the U.S.

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