



**Ancient City**  
Chiropractic & Physical Therapy

A close-up photograph of a hand in a blue shirt pointing to a model of a human spine. The spine is white with yellow intervertebral discs and is positioned vertically in the center of the image.

**THE THREE MAIN  
INJURIES  
ANY SPINE CAN HAVE**

*“Don’t make your injury experience worse by choosing the wrong doctor or the wrong attorney to assist you.”*

Joseph Accurso DC  
Cathy Accurso PT, CKTP, FAFS

**THERE ARE THREE MAIN INJURIES THAT CAN HAPPEN TO THE SPINE. UNDERSTANDING THESE INJURIES IS WHAT SETS OUR CLINIC APART, AND IS THE REASON WHY ANYONE WHO INJURES THEIR SPINE SHOULD SCHEDULE A SPINAL EVALUATION WITH US IMMEDIATELY.**

**MOST PROVIDERS ARE NOT PROPERLY TRAINED TO DIAGNOSE ALL THREE, LEAVING YOU SUFFERING FROM CHRONIC PAIN AND DISABILITY YEARS LATER.**

**KNOWING WHAT TO DO WITH THESE THREE INJURIES IS THE KEY TO YOUR RECOVERY!**



# THE THREE MAIN INJURIES AND HOW WE DIAGNOSE THEM

The spine is made up of only two tissues: bone (in your spine these are called vertebrae) and connective tissue (called ligaments).

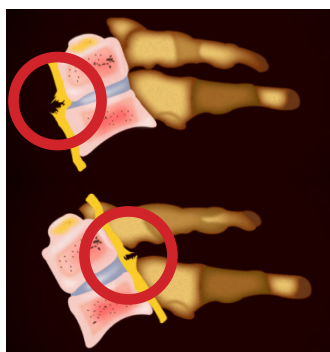
Injuries to the bone (vertebrae) are called fractures. These we diagnose using x-ray images.

There are two different injuries to the ligaments. One ligament injury is a disc herniation. Many people have heard of "discs". These are the 23 spinal ligaments that provide shock absorption to the spine. While the discs are very important, and can be quite painful if badly injured, they are not the most significant injury. If we feel your disc may have been damaged (herniated) an MRI study is used to capture its image. We will send you out for this test if needed.

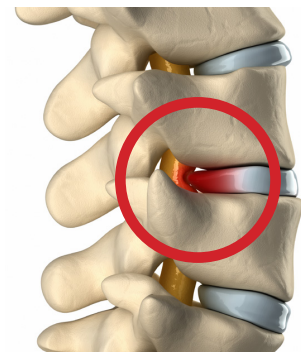
The most significant injury is to the "spinal support" ligaments. These support ligaments hold your spinal bones in position. There are 197 support ligaments. Of the three injuries, the one that has the potential to be most problematic and cause long-term chronic pain is damage to the spinal support ligaments- causing instability. When these ligaments are damaged, that section of the spine becomes permanently unstable, causing vertebrae to move excessively, creating inflammation and irritation to the spinal nerves. This injury also causes the joint or joints to wear out (degenerate) faster over time. This is the most common reason for chronic pain and disability. This injury is not tested for by most providers and left undiagnosed. Don't worry, we will be using specialized x-ray imaging to test you for this injury, and are experts at diagnosing and treating them.



**Fracture**



**Support Ligament Injury**



**Disc Herniation**

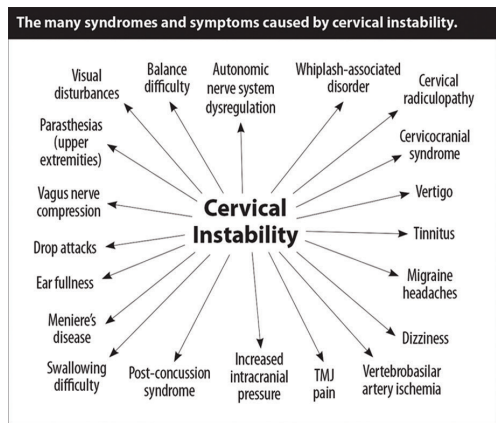
Doctors are missing your injuries because they are using the wrong imaging tests! An MRI is not enough. Proper radiology imaging and analysis must be performed to discover spinal instability.

To understand the support ligament injury better, let's compare this spinal ligament injury to an injury in the knee joint. If you injure your ACL (anterior cruciate ligament), it is considered a major injury to the ligaments in the knee and you may not be able to walk. Your spine is composed of 100 joints, similar to the one in your knee (only much smaller), and an injury to any of those spinal support ligaments may leave you in pain, like the pain you would feel if you sprained your ankle or tore your ACL! A major difference between a knee ligament injury and a spinal ligament injury is that the spinal support ligament injury can cause a whole lot of other serious symptoms besides pain.

### What Your Symptoms Tell Us

A disc injury causes only cause two basic symptoms: localized pain in that area of the spine and/or a radicular complaint (radicular means involving the nerve root). A common radicular complaint is when the pain from the disc injury travels down the arm(s) if it is in the neck, or down the legs if it is in the lower back. A disc injury can be very painful, but it still has only those two symptoms generally associated with it. If an individual has any other symptoms, it is generally caused by damage to the support ligaments- causing spinal instability. Review the graphic below and learn what symptoms a support ligament injury can produce. You will see there are a LOT more problems that this injury can cause!

**MIDBACK PAIN SEVERE FATIGUE SINUS CONGESTION**  
**LOWER BACK PAIN MIGRAINE HEADACHES**  
**FACIAL PAIN VISUAL DISTURBANCES LOSS OF VOICE**  
**SHOULDER PAIN DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING**  
**SCAPULAR PAIN PAIN RADIATING DOWN THE ARMS**  
**THE SYMPTOMS OF**  
**SPINAL LIGAMENT INJURY**  
**PAIN RADIATING DOWN THE LEGS HEADACHES**  
**CONCUSSION SYNDROME EAR PAIN RINGING IN THE EARS**  
**NECK PAIN BLADDER OR BOWEL DYSFUNCTION**  
**NUMBNESS, TINGLING OR A SENSE OF WEAKNESS OR HEAVINESS IN THE ARMS**  
**DISTURBANCES IN MEMORY DIFFICULTY BREATHING**  
**NUMBNESS, TINGLING OR A SENSE OF WEAKNESS OR HEAVINESS IN THE LEGS**  
**DISTURBANCES IN CONCENTRATION**

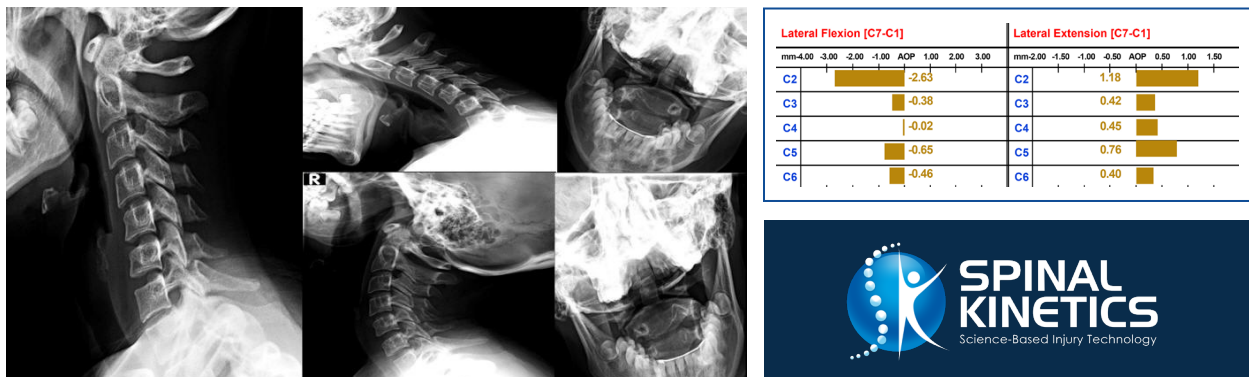


**Anyone you know that suffers from chronic spine related pain has experienced a spinal support ligament injury- creating spinal instability.** This instability causes them to suffer with chronic problems such as chronic lower back pain, chronic neck pain, and even chronic headaches. If anyone you know suffers from any of those symptoms chronically (persists consistently beyond three months), they more than likely have this condition, and simply never worked with a doctor that could properly identify it (diagnose it), and more importantly, treat it.

**The non-disc ligament injuries are the most severe. Disc injuries only cause 2 primary symptoms and do not account for the majority of your suffering.**

**\*Please note:** If both the disc and the support ligaments are significantly damaged, treatment can take longer to stabilize your condition. Be diligent with your treatment! What we do together now will have an effect, good or bad, on how your spine behaves in the future.

Damage to the spinal support ligaments are diagnosed using a specialized set of spinal x-rays called "stress" x-rays. These will be taken and sent out to a specialized radiology service to have them accurately measured for spinal instability. Test results are typically received within 1-2 business days. Damage to a spinal ligament is also called a sprain injury. With this test, we will be able to immediately determine the grade of sprain (severity) as well as the degree of instability present.



**CRMA® is performed by a Board Certified Medical Radiologist**

We will then be able to modify your treatment plan accordingly. The more excessive motion that is detected, the more damage to the spinal ligaments is present. And the more damage there is, the more treatment you may need to get better. This may include chiropractic care, physical therapy, pain management services if needed, and in a very small percentage of cases, a surgical consult.

This is not cause for concern! Our job is to accurately diagnose your injuries, stabilize your body, and resolve the injuries as quickly as possible. We are very good at what we do! That being said, we are going to need your help. Most people try to minimize these injuries simply because they do not realize the statistics associated with them. Again, these injuries are the number one cause of chronic pain and disability.



As I indicated above, the reason these statistics are poor is primarily due to the patient seeking treatment with a doctor that did not know how to identify and treat these injuries. If you don't think that is true, just look around, and you, too, will begin to see all the people that suffer from chronic lower back pain, chronic neck pain, or chronic

headaches, to name a few. If you ask them if they have ever been tested for spinal instability, they will almost 100% of time either say no or tell you they have no idea what you are talking about.

We take this condition very seriously as, statistically, 55% or more of patients that have a moderate to severe spinal ligament injury never fully recover. That is expensive when seen in terms of potential future medical care costs. The American Pain Society says the medical cost alone to manage this injury when found in the lower back can be between \$9,000.00 - \$19,000.00 per year, and we can surmise that it





would be close to the same price when located in the neck. The loss in future quality of life can be an even bigger price to pay.

Our goal here is simple. We want to help you get back to your pre-injury status as quickly as possible so that you can get back to doing the things that you enjoy, pain free, BOTH now and far in the future! Great injury rehabilitation can save a fortune in future medical/chiropractic/physical therapy costs. You will want to focus on getting this injury rehabilitated FULLY and not try to cut corners or stop

Medical treatment for chronic low back pain is estimated to cost **\$9,000 to \$19,000 per patient annually**, and interventional treatments cost a minimum of \$13 billion in 1990. Additional costs are associated with days lost from work due to low back pain. Low back pain is the **most common cause for chronic or permanent impairment in U.S adults** under the age 65, and the most common cause of activity limitations in persons under the age of 45. Between 2% and 8% of the U.S work force is disabled or compensated for back injuries each year.

Guideline for the Evaluation and Management of Low Back Pain - Evidence Review, Roger Chou, MD • Laurie Hoyt Huffman, MS

care prematurely before we have achieved maximum results. Doing so can be very expensive for you in the future, so take the time and maximize your results right now, as you NEVER get this time back. Let's do it right! We will help you every step of the way.

## **Get back to living your life on your terms! It takes a team to return you to your high quality life as quickly as possible.**

To do this, we need you to follow your treatment plan and be an active participant with us in your care. We will give you additional resources that show you how to assist in your own recovery, as well as help you form habits that will assist in the long-term



health of your spine. We need you to communicate about any concerns or questions that you may have right away, during treatment. And lastly, we need you to understand that when something is unstable, it is "prone to erratic or unpredictable behavior." If your neighbor is unstable, they are prone to erratic or unpredictable behavior. Spinal instabilities are no

different. As you go through treatment to stabilize this condition, it is not uncommon for a “flare up” to occur. This may seem like you are right back at day one. You are not! You simply need to come in right away for a treatment or two, and you will be right back on the road to recovery. Also, long-term, we may make recommendations for supportive care after the conclusion of your claim. This is care that will be recommended so that you can continue to keep your spine stable and healthy for the rest of your life and avoid the mistakes that many have made which lead to a life of chronic pain.

This will be addressed when your primary injury care is concluded. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding your care or your condition. We highly recommend that you pass this booklet on to your medical doctor if you are working with one, and your attorney if you have one or will retain one in the future. They need to understand the extent of your injuries as well.

**We are so grateful for referrals! Trusting us with your and your family's health is the greatest gift we could ask for.**

Lastly, we always appreciate referrals. If someone you know has recently injured their spine or suffers from some form of chronic pain, please make sure they get a copy of this booklet. They, too, run the risk of working with a clinic that does not understand how to fully diagnose their injuries or the “root” cause of their chronic pain. Therefore, they continue to suffer needlessly. We appreciate your help, and welcome to our center!



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