Chart Your Path to a Healthy Work-Life Balance as a Chiropractor

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance helps reduce stress and prevent burnout in the workplace. But what does work-life balance mean in the digital age? The current workforce is always connected, and it's more challenging now than ever before to "shut off."

According to a Harvard Business School survey, 94 percent of professionals work more than 50 hours per week, and nearly half say they work more than 65 hours per week.[1]

This is also reflected in the healthcare field, where a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that limiting shifts for medical trainees improves job satisfaction and makes residents more satisfied with their work-life balance without affecting educational outcomes.[2] Of course, it's not only current working professionals who are concerned about the impact of unhealthy work-life balance.

59% of millennials report feeling worried about finding a career path that will support the lifestyle they've envisioned for themselves, according to the 2017 Workplace Benefits Report by Bank of America Merrill Lynch.[3] And given that millennials are projected to make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, most people will be looking for a career that provides a balance between their professional and personal lives.

Chiropractors benefit from a healthy work-life balance while maintaining above-average salaries and high job satisfaction. Enjoy this guide to learn how to achieve a healthy work-life balance with a career in chiropractic.

A Balanced Healthcare Career

Healthcare careers are often associated with unapologetically long hours, high-pressure situations, and an overall demanding work-life balance. But the chiropractic field can be the exception. Chiropractors often work 40-hour work weeks in climate-controlled offices that are quiet and welcoming. Numerous nationwide studies performed over the last 30 years reveal that chiropractors have very high patient satisfaction rates, and patients have been shown to seek chiropractic care over other types of healthcare treatments.[4] Chiropractic is also on the top 25 list of Professions with the Best Job Security, according to U.S. News and World Report.[5]

85% of Office Professionals say flexibility is a key factor for job satisfaction[6]

– Capital One survey

Flexible Work Environment

The work environment for a chiropractor is highly desirable. Chiropractors often own their own practices or work in smaller, quieter clinics compared to the professional spaces of other medical professionals. Chiropractors can also live and work anywhere since they don't need to be near major hospitals, and can choose from a variety of specializations to focus on.

While technology makes it harder to shut off from work, it has also opened up more work-from-home opportunities. With a computer, a phone, and a few hundred square feet of space, home offices are more prevalent now than ever before. Chiropractors don't rely on the same technology as other professionals, but it's still very common for chiropractors to work from home. Those who do work from home can save time and money by not having to commute to an office.

Chiropractor Action Steps:

1. Create a comfortable and welcoming office for you and your clients.
2. Follow flexible office hours and schedule remote availability.
3. Balance your time between work, family, and friends.
4. Establish great communication and trust with colleagues and patients.

Professional Freedom

Being a chiropractor provides professional freedom and flexibility that many only dream about. The demand for chiropractic care is rising in all communities—rural, urban, and places in-between. Maybe you prefer to practice at a location where you can play golf every morning, or hit the slopes for some night skiing. Perhaps you love the water and want to surf, sail, or scuba dive. Even if it's just the flexibility to schedule time with your family, a chiropractic career affords professional freedoms that are the envy of the healthcare field.

Chiropractor Action Steps:

1. Research a focus for your practice that's close to your passions and hobbies (i.e., if you're interested in sports, consider a chiropractic practice that caters to athletes).
2. Become a champion of planning, prioritizing, and communicating.
3. Get tips from a mentor who successfully balances work and life.
4. Invest in yourself personally and professionally.

Self-Employment

One of the most appealing aspects of becoming a chiropractor is the potential of owning your own business as a self-employed individual. Thirty percent of chiropractors are self-employed.[7] Self-employed chiropractors have control over where they want to work and live in any of the 50 U.S. states, as well as in many other countries around the world; they aren't restricted to living just in the cities where the job openings are located.

While being self-employed and operating your own business can be nerve-wracking for some, the lure of being your own boss, setting your own hours, and controlling every aspect of your practice are immensely popular.

Chiropractor Action Steps:

1. Shadow a mentor who owns their own business.
2. Conduct market research on your region or city.
3. Learn how to promote and market your services.
4. Open your business and remain agile as the industry evolves.

Scheduled Workday

Most patient visits for chiropractors are by appointment only, with very few drop-ins. This provides chiropractors with control over their schedules and helps decrease burnout from a constant stream of unscheduled patients. Chiropractors spend the early part of the morning looking over their appointments, reviewing the patients and treatments scheduled for that day and preparing to provide excellent care. Many clinics have adopted online or automated scheduling software, so chiropractors may consider appointments themselves or with an assistant. Either way, this is a very flexible and organized way of scheduling patients when compared to some other healthcare professions.

Start Your Journey Towards a Healthy Work-Life Balance

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Becoming a Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.) is a life-changing journey. Alongside peers from diverse backgrounds and a community of experienced and aspiring doctors, learn what it takes to be well, stay well, and put healing in your hands.

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