

Pain-Free Dentistry: You Deserve It!

by Sandy Richardson, Peak Performance Coach

It's amazing to realize that nearly all dentists, hygienists and assistants experience some sort of physical pain – some on a daily basis. Most often it's in the neck, shoulders and lower back. The distraction of pain causes reduced commitment and inconsistent results, whether in patient care, leadership of team, personal fitness or quality of life. I've even known some dentists who were ready to give up because of too much pain or who were ready for surgery in hopes of alleviating the pain. How great would it be if you could plan your retirement, rather than end a career because of pain? Or how great would it be to simply increase the quality of your physical health so that your work can be enjoyable again?

There is an answer – a revolutionary method for stopping chronic pain. You can eliminate chronic pain without drugs, surgery, or other invasive procedures. Developed by Pete Egoscue, a sports injury consultant to some of today's major athletes and used exclusively at his renowned clinics in California and Connecticut, the Egoscue Method has a 95% success rate. Pete believes in low-impact, easy-to-perform series of exercises that return the body to its natural design and posture and in the process completely eliminates even the most severe pain.

In a recent interview with me, Egoscue shared his philosophy concerning pain experienced by dental professionals. "Working with dentists and hygienists for many years, I noticed that many of them experience pain in the back, neck and arms. Dentistry did not do this to them. The reason many dentists and hygienists are in pain is because the body has the capacity to respond to whatever stimulus it receives. The remarkable thing is that your body gives you what you ask of it."

Pete continues, "When a dentist turns left and operates with the dominant hand, the body is asked to be in a compromised position in

order to deliver care to the patient. The body is quite agreeable and says, 'Okay, if that's what you want, I'll give it to you. I'll move in that direction.' This repeated stimulus will often create pain. To alleviate pain, a dentist has two choices: change the stimulus or change the environment. Changing one's environment is not practical. Changing the stimulus is the necessary path to take."

"The most important thing to remember is that your body responds to stimulus without prejudice. Your body doesn't know if the stimulus/motion is good or bad. It doesn't recognize the stimulus as one that will result in pain."

"Most people forget that the human body is a living organism. This appears to be the hardest thing for individuals to grasp. There's nothing dead in the body – it's all alive: muscles, bones, tissues, etc. Being alive means there is a constant renewal of tissues and bone. Our stimulus must be consistent to directing the body in the right direction to grow. Otherwise, the body will maintain the lifestyle given it. "

A dentist can continue to do dentistry, pain free, by keeping the body in alignment and performing appropriate exercises that enable the body to stay balanced and in motion.

This is an easy thing to talk about and the hardest thing to do. Feeling pain is a message that your dysfunctions or stimulus are still in control. Shift your thinking to: pain is not good and we can get rid of it. Instead of looking for what is wrong, it's the body's voice that we must listen to and we have to interpret it properly. As well as being



a highly integrated structure, the body has a tremendous capacity for self-healing.

Take these four steps and you'll be closer to correcting the stimulus of pain:

1. Come from a place of acceptance to change your mindset. Believe you can change it.
2. Recognize that the body will tell you exactly what's wrong.
3. Make a call to action = CHANGE – the hardest thing to do.
4. Maintain the CHANGE = return to health.

Focusing on proper alignment, posture, and muscle engagement, Egoscue provides simple and powerful techniques to restore flexibility and function while at the same time boosting energy, revving up the immune system, even raising the body's metabolic rate.

Just as you educate and motivate your patients to better dental health, you must do the same to get better results in your physical health. It takes commitment on your part to create a plan of exercises that will improve motion and eventually eliminate pain. Many dental teams have incorporated three simple exercises in their daily morning huddles. Consistency is the key.

Three great exercises to stretch and relax the shoulders, neck and upper body.

1. ARM Circles: Feet straight, shoulder width apart. Arms outstretched at shoulder level, hands in golfer's grip, palms down, thumbs pointing forward. Circle forward in a 6 inch diameter circle x 25. Reverse the circles: turn the palms up and thumbs back x 25. Repeat for total of fifty times in each direction.
2. ELBOWS Curls: Feet straight, shoulder width apart. Hands at temples in golfer's grip, Pull the elbows back evenly and in line with the shoulders, slowly swing the elbows forward until they touch in front. Keep the knuckles in contact with the temples and head erect. Do 25 of these.

3. OVERHEAD Extension: Feet straight, shoulder width apart. Interlace fingers, stretch upward, palms toward ceiling, look up at the backs of your hands. Keep the arms in vertical alignment with shoulders and the rest of the body. Hold for one minute.

Pete Egoscue's books are a great way for health practitioners to identify the philosophy of The Egoscue Method. The remarkable "E-cises" in his books have also been linked to improved ability to fight disease, cope with aging, and recover from accidents and injuries. The "miracle" cure Egoscue offers is, simply, correct your motion. Visit <http://www.egoscue.com> to discover the next step to PAIN FREE Dentistry.

"Pain Free is based on a very sound understanding of human physiology. It shows how we can break the circuit of pain and naturally heal one of the most significant disabilities of our times."

Deepak Chopra

"Pete Egoscue changed my life in the most positive ways imaginable. Pain Free for Women is a must read for women of all ages -- it's a brilliant blueprint for enhancing the quality of one's life."

Sheila Grant, cofounder of regional ballet in Texas

"I am not a believer in 'methods.' I'm a believer in fundamentals. That's still my view when it comes to golf, but as for an aching back and the rest of the body, I do believe in a method: the Egoscue Method. I have been to many specialists around the world, and yes, a few enabled me to achieve some marginal and temporary relief from pain. But never had I experienced such complete relief as I have by following the Egoscue Method."

Jack Nicklaus

The body wants to maintain health – it wants to do what is good for it. The body will take you there quickly as long as you give it the correct stimulus. Enjoy your journey to Pain Free Dentistry.

**The Richardson Group**