

FAMILY TIME

With the weather colder and having to spend more time indoors (instead of outside running and playing), little ones can begin to experience stress which can lead to emotional outbursts, atypical crankiness, as well as abnormal disagreements with parents or siblings. Children react to stress in many the same ways that adults do, that's why it may be beneficial to consider trying some of these helpful calming techniques.

Belly Breaths: Taking deep, belly-filling breaths sends an all-clear signal to the nervous system that triggers the relaxation response: the heart beats more slowly, blood pressure comes down, and the muscles release tension, says Susan Biali, M.D., the author of *Live a Life You Love*. Have the child sit or lie down and coach them on breathing in through their nose and out through their mouth, being sure to fill up their belly with air. Perhaps encourage them to place their hand on their belly so that they can feel the rise and fall with each inhalation and exhalation.

Lullabies and More: Studies have shown that soothing music lowers heart rate, blood pressure and stress-hormone levels. It also creates a mellow mood. Begin by trying different types of soothing music either in the car or at bedtime (classical, acoustic guitar, lullabies) and ask the child how this is making them feel: Calm? Happy? If music is having the desired effect, consider placing a CD player close by so that they can resort to their own stress-reliever if they wake in the middle of the night.

Mindfulness: A very basic technique, based on a type of meditation called mindfulness, encourages children to focus on the body's physical sensations as opposed to scattered thoughts. The concept equates a scattered mind to a shaken snow globe, the snow doesn't settle until the snow globe is held still. Encourage the child to focus their mind on one physical sensation (such as their feet touching the floor) and think about that one for 5 to 10 breaths; older kids can go for a minute.

Calming Repetition: This would be similar to a childlike mantra that involves the calming repetition of certain words. When the mind can give one phrase undivided attention it's less likely to bounce around. The easiest way to teach the child this tool is to say "I am" then take a deep breath together, then let that breath out and say "relaxed". With younger kids it may be necessary to say this aloud a few times but eventually children learn to say the mantra silently so that they can use this tool even when a parent isn't available.

De-Stress: As much as we would wish it weren't so, children of all ages face stressful situations and equipping them with tools to help fight that stress will empower them to overcome upset by their own choice.

Source: modified from realsimple.com



HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR FAMILY WELLNESS CHIROPRACTOR

As your Doctor of Chiropractic, we acknowledge the importance of gait and its impact on your spine. Proper shoe-ware can make a difference in your spinal alignment.

Trendy Boots Not Good for Gait

"As a podiatrist, I've never liked Uggs," says Mike O'Neill. In the beginning the heel of the boot was poorly made and so would get flattened with repeated use. The wearer was eventually walking on mostly scrunched up fabric. As such the foot slipped around within the boot leading to problems with gait and eventual pain.

Recognizing an issue, the makers of Uggs reinforced the heel but due to their hefty price tag most teens are wearing cheap imitations that have no reinforcements.

Imitations are Even Worse

Medical experts have warned that the trend for cheap Ugg boots are crippling a generation of young women. They say they are seeing an increase in women with toe deformities,

backache and pain in their feet as a result of these boots. A phrase has been coined for the gait of devoted wearers – the Ugg shuffle – which describes the lopsided, pigeon-toed way the cheap versions of the boots force women to walk.

According to the Head of the British College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Drysdale, "Because these boots are warm and soft, young girls think they are giving their feet a break. In fact, they are literally breaking their feet. Their feet are slipping around inside. With each step, the force falls toward the inside of the foot and the feet splay. This flattens the arch and makes it drop. The result can be significant problems with the foot, the ankle, and ultimately, the hip."

