

# THE BALANCE FACTOR

Dr. Denise Russel

Ever wonder why tread wears out on the outside of your tires? It's because they are not balanced properly! Our spines can wear out too if we are not balanced. Our spines set on top of our hips and when we load up, or hang things from our belt, we have to make sure we are loaded "weight-wise" on both sides equally. Recently I had a police officer at my home... (no need to know why, and yes my husband knows). He related to me how he would carry his fire arm in the small of the back (S.O.B.) and over the years this carry method caused him back pain. As a Chiropractor, I'm always looking at side-to-side balance, but after discussing the back pain of the Officer who carried S.O.B. style, it's got me thinking that front-to-back balance is also important. By carrying the weight of the firearm in the small of the back, it causes the spine to flex forward ever so slightly. Over years it produced wear and tear and disc bulging in his spine. When he changed to a hip holster carried on his side, and put his cuff carrier and other items on the other side to balance the weight of his firearm, he removed that pressure off his back. No matter what you decide to carry on your body, whether a back pack, handgun, fanny pack, belt pack, etc., it is important that you think about how this added weight, and it's placement on your body, affects a change in your posture.

Leaning to one side can cause pressure on the spine and can result in hip, knee and ankle pain. Evaluating for spinal issues can be complicated and I recommend seeing a biophysics chiropractor found at [www.idealspine.com](http://www.idealspine.com). Having an anatomical short leg can make the imbalance worse. Leaning, caused by extra weight on one side of the body, will speed up arthritis of the spine. 30-50% of people are born with one leg shorter than the other and this also causes leaning. The problem with leaning to one side, or being crooked, is that you are wearing out your joints and discs, ultimately creating arthritis – arthritis that you may not even be aware. That is, unless you have arthritis pain, you won't know this is happening to you. Probably the first reaction to arthritis pain is to open the arsenal of pain pills in



the medicine cabinet. Be advised, pain pills do not fix the cause that your spine is crooked, they just covers it up for a while!

The bigger picture is that you have nerves that run through your spine which allow the brain to talk to every cell in your body. If you have a crooked spine, those nerves, and their ability to communicate with the rest of the body, are being affected. When the boss can't communicate, what happens in the shop? When the brain can't talk 100% to the rest of the body how do you think the body will work? Your nerves carry messages from the brain and if there is pressure on them *you* will not work right.

Keep your spine aligned! Distribute the weight of handguns and ammo equally on your hips. Avoid placing all the weight from conceal carry on one side of the body. Side carry is better than back carry. And remember, You don't have to hurt. If you have back pain see a Chiropractor to get an evaluation. Make sure your tires don't wear out and you can perform to your best ability any time, any where!!

Editor's Note and Appreciation: Dr. Denise Russel is a practicing Chiropractor in Lansing, Michigan. Her practice involves adjustment of the spine, suggestions for the health conscience, and pain-free, drug-free, and surgery-free solutions to chronic pain whether body or back pain. If you live in the Mid-Michigan area, I highly suggest you contact Dr. D. for an evaluation. Her office is second amendment friendly and I can attest that her rehabilitation programs work – Very Well! And by the way, I do carry BALANCED!



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