

## Q: What is a healthy spine?

### A: A healthy spine...

- 1. is aligned.** The body wants to be in a state of minimal energy expenditure. The optimal, natural alignment of the head and vertebrae (bones of the spinal column) allows the body's weight to be carried by the proper structures (the bones and ligaments) instead of the muscles being asked to do the work. The chance of arthritis developing is greatly reduced. Alignment also allows for sufficient space for the nerves to flow, so the message system of the body can function at its best. This is vital for health.
- 2. is soft.** In a healthy spine, there is no unnecessary stored tension in spinal ligaments, muscles or nerves. There are no places that feel stuck, blocked or lifeless.
- 3. breathes.** The entire length of the spine from the occiput (head) to the sacrum (tailbone) is involved with each full breath. Each segment (vertebra) of the spinal column is free to "wobble" or oscillate, and does so several times per minute with each breath. With a healthy spine, we are much more likely to choose postures, activities and behaviors that optimize this freedom. This brings us to the way a healthy spine...
- 4. moves.** The spinal column is made up of 27 movable segments. In a healthy spine, there are no fixations or restrictions in any of the spinal subsystems, so the entire spine is involved in any movement such as reaching down or up, turning one's head, or bending to the side. Picture the freedom of movement that a snake or dolphin has (or your favorite dancer!) Growing older does not have to mean moving less.
- 5. is self correcting,** and can recover quickly from mishaps such as over exertion, falls, long car rides or desk work, or the spinal tension that results from an emotionally trying day.
- 6. is your natural state!** A healthy spine is achievable at any age. In the course of your care here, as you begin to understand the pleasures of a healthy spine, let us know what level of spinal health you are committed to, and we will help you get there!