

The Chiropractic Table:

What To Look For In Today's Market

by Dr. Gary Huddleston



Since its inception the chiropractic profession has continued to move forward with the ultimate goal of delivering the best adjustment possible. Over time we have also seen our share of gadgets and gizmos come and go; however, there's one thing that has withstood the test of time, and that has been the chiropractic adjustment table.

There's no doubt that the early models were nothing more than crude pieces of furniture stuck together to accommodate the patient and the doctor's adjustment. As the profession grew, so did the quality, features, and versatility of the adjusting table. Today's chiropractors have a wide selection available to them, from simple benches and drop tables to high lows and electric flexion tables, all of which have a viable place in the chiropractic profession.

If you are looking for a new adjusting table, just exactly what are you looking for? Whether you're a new practitioner or a seasoned warrior, we all have the same needs. We're currently fortunate to have many companies that offer safe, affordable, and versatile tables to fit any need and/or any budget. It's your job to determine the perfect fit for your practice. In today's volatile economy, every doctor needs to get the most bang-for-their-buck possible. In some instances, their adjusting table will probably need to do double or even

triple duty, ranging from a treatment table to a therapy table to an exam table. Some tables will do all, and some will not meet any of your needs efficiently; it is your due diligence that makes the difference.

First of all, what features do you and your practice need? If you don't do any drop work, getting a table with drops is probably a waste of money. Avoid the drops and save your dollars, or spend them on features you need and want. Many doctors have gone to flexion or electric flexion tables which seem to be huge sellers since they can be used for a myriad of different techniques as well as filling the space for therapy or exams. Just remember to price the table according to your needs, and not to a salesman's pitch.

The High Low still remains a staple in our profession, and again, you can buy them with drops, without drops, and even with elevation. You need to ensure that these have a heavy-duty base, strong motor, and can take the strain of raising thousands of pounds of patients over the course of your work day. Nothing is more frustrating than having a table that breaks down, and then enduring the wait for parts or repairs so you can quickly resume treating your patients.

When speaking with a chiropractic table company, ask a few questions. Are the tables FDA cleared or FDA exempt? Many tables do not need

510k clearance, unlike most pieces of electrostim. Secondly, ask how long they've been in business and where their tables are manufactured. There's nothing wrong with considering a table company newly on the market, but it does take time for a manufacturer to learn every little nuance and the specifics that a chiropractic table should fill.

Probably one of the biggest concerns, as it should be, is price. You can find the simplest of benches for a hundred dollars or so, and there are tables that cost nearly \$15,000. All of these have a place somewhere in some doctor's office. But just because a table is low-priced doesn't mean that it is low quality or prone to breakdown, nor does a high-priced table guarantee optimum quality either. A visual examination will reveal how sturdily-built many of these tables are, and often you can see pitfalls and problems simply by looking at a picture. You honestly can't expect a \$1,500 table to have the functions or options of an \$8,000 table, but you need to ensure that the \$1,500 table will meet all of your requirements. You may have to add a few options, which will raise the price, but make certain you build and order the table that best fits you, your specific style, and the growing needs of your practice.

Also, you need to ask the manufacturer how long it will take for the table to be produced. Often a doctor

will call a company to order a table, only to find out that it will take 10 weeks to be delivered. This is a common mistake many new doctors run across, i.e. because there are so very many variables most table companies don't have lots of tables readily available to ship. It is often the case that the adjusting table is the last thing to be ordered but one of the first things needed when you open your doors. Many doctors will order a table after talking to a manufacturer or sales representative. If the company has been around a long time, you can trust that you'll get a great product, and exactly what you need to have and exactly what you ordered. If the table company is new or doesn't have much of a track record, you should request the name of a doctor who has a table you can look at. A simple hands-on may answer all of your questions.

There's one critical point that needs to be addressed: many practice management companies or consultants strongly advise new doctors (and even long-term practitioners) to buy the cheapest adjusting table they can find. Yes, you can buy simple benches for just a hundred dollars or two from just about anywhere; however, if you're building your practice not only do you need to think about your technique but also the image your clinic presents. Today's patients have often seen other chiropractors and may have been treated on good quality tables, not just a plain, thinly-padded, uncomfortable bench. (There are several good companies, however, who do make very high quality adjusting benches.)

While many doctors will say that it's your technique, and not the table, that will build your practice, you need to consider this argument: to a chiropractor our adjusting table is our main tool that we use to help people and get them well. We can truly compare the tools of our trade to the tools that a surgeon uses. Would you want to be operated on by a surgeon who uses the cheapest scalpels he can find? A set of steak knives will cut you, but do you want your surgeon using them on you? Our chiropractic adjustment means the same to us as the surgeon's skills do to him, and good, well-built equipment should be used by both.

You don't have to purchase the most expensive table available; just purchase the best table your budget can afford, one that will serve you and your patients for years to come. There are so many concerns when starting a new practice or, for that matter, running an existing one. Regardless, and whether you are a new doctor or a 20-year veteran, you need to get an adjusting table that you're comfortable with, that will work well with your technique, and that will provide you with years of trouble-free use.

About The Author: Dr. Gary Huddleston is owner of Accuflex Tables and The Accu Laser. He has been manufacturing quality chiropractic tables and in practice for over 36 years, and works extensively in film, music, entertainment, and sports. Contact him at 573-557-2626, email at drg4000@att.net or visit www.accuflextables.com.

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