

My Bones & My Hyundai Kona

When I was 12 years old, a boy in school pulled my chair out from under me. I landed hard on my tailbone. Medical professionals misdiagnosed the injury to my spine for 33 years.

At first the pain wasn't bad, so I kept doing everything. But the pain kept increasing until normal sitting and standing became extremely painful. I had difficulty earning money as an adult because how do you earn money when normal sitting and standing are painful?

In 1988, I moved to a house in a rural area and went from driving occasionally to driving every weekday. My hips began hurting intensely.

In 1991, I discovered while riding in a friend's car that some foreign cars had seats that stopped my hip pain. I could not afford to buy that kind of car for myself until 2020.

I received the correct diagnosis in 1996 from a nurse in an audience when I gave a dinner business talk. I had explained to my audience why I used a tall stool instead of standing during my talk and why I used a lumbar pillow while sitting for dinner. I asked them to tell any children in their lives to never pull a chair out from under anyone. One chiropractor told me that some people are instantly paralyzed. I'm lucky that I can still walk.

The nurse told me that when I hit the floor, my spinal cord tensed up. The pain came from the tension in my spinal cord. Every time I did something that hurt, the tension in my spinal cord increased until my pelvis was pulled all the way backwards. For decades, my spine had no S curve. My hips shifted out of place when I started driving more because my pelvis was out of place.

The nurse recommended a treatment for my spine. The treatment released the tension in my spinal cord and my pelvis moved back into place in a matter of minutes. However, all of the muscles from my hips to my shoulders had been doing the wrong thing for decades. My muscles were too weak to hold my hips in place. They continued to shift out of place. I felt pain from my back muscles trying to get used to normal and from my hips still shifting out of place.

I do the yoga cobra stretch every night. In 2014, I started writing in my journal about lower back vertebrae moving out of place. I never felt my vertebrae moving out of place. I only felt them moving back into place while doing normal activities or during stretches and exercises. Doing the cobra, I felt one to three vertebrae thunks in my lower back every night. Thunks are so loud I can hear them. Thunks are also painful and the pain can last for hours.

I felt three different kinds of vertebrae movements. I call them cracks, shifts, and thunks.

Cracks are the smallest movement and I'm not even sure what they are because they're not just in my vertebrae. I can feel them in my shoulders as well.

Shifts are vertebrae that have moved out of place a little bit.

Thunks are vertebrae that have moved out of place a lot.

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I picked up my 2021 Hyundai Kona SEL SUV on August 31, 2020. My hips are now firmly in place. But again, my muscles are doing normal again after decades of doing abnormal. I have sore muscles again, though I know that the pain will finally eventually end.

The more I drove my Kona, the fewer thunks I felt. The thunks started disappearing in October 2020. It started out with no thunks once or twice a week, to no thunks for more than a week, to no thunks for a few weeks. I felt my last vertebrae thunk on August 10, 2021. Now when I do the cobra stretch, my lower spine feels like my vertebrae can no longer move out of place. Given the history of my spine, the vertebra thunks began disappearing at the speed of light.

On days I don't drive, I sit in my car for 20 minutes. Afterwards, I can feel a difference I don't know how to describe. Driving is good for my bones, but I still feel muscle pain from the movements of driving. Just sitting in my car for 20 minutes can reduce muscle pain.

I still feel cracks and shifts because my muscles are still getting used to normal. I have more pain to live through while my muscles get used to normal, but once they've adjusted, I get a normal life back with no limiting pain at all.

I am 70 years old and I get to spend the end of my life doing everything I couldn't do for most of my life so far, including sports. As a kid, I was always the first girl the boys picked for our backyard teams. I plan to participate in Senior Olympics when my muscles are ready. I've been doing exercises since the injury happened when I was 12. Both grandmothers lived into their late 80's and my mother lived until 91. I expect to live to 100 or more because my lifestyle is healthier than theirs was. Because of my Kona, I look forward to three decades of the physical activities I couldn't do for several previous decades.

The treatment that released the tension in my spinal cord and moved my pelvis back into place was simple and involved a laser pen.

The chiropractor had studied Neural Organizational Technique. He said my spinal cord was attached to my spine by two muscles, one in my neck and one at the base of my spine. Those muscles were also tensed. He shined his laser pen on the muscle in my neck. That muscle relaxed, releasing the tension in my spinal cord. My pelvis moved right back into place.

Total cost? Less than \$600, which included a first visit checkup and evaluation. Total cost for all of the misdiagnoses? Thousands, at least. Since I had difficulty earning money, taxpayers footed most of the bills for those 33 years of misdiagnoses.

A physical therapist conducting a functional assessment for Social Security disability gave my last misdiagnosis. Because the assessment was the equivalent of torture to me, I cried. She decided my tears meant I was 'hostile' to her. After listening to me talk about the accident and the increasing pain over two decades, she said my pain was emotional and if I just kept doing what hurt, the pain would go away. At the moment of her misdiagnosis, my pelvis was out of place, my hips were out of

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place, and my spine had no S curve. Because that physical therapist imagined hostility in my tears, she ignored the evidence from 23 years of my life.

I want to thank everyone at Hyundai for giving a normal life back to me.

Thank you.

Paula M. Kramer

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