

24. Creating Power Hours

I like asking chiropractors what they enjoy most about their practice. It offers me an insight into the person, and it typically starts an enjoyable conversation.

The most common answer I hear is a description of the time when the house is packed, the energy is upbeat, and the doctor's "in the zone," going from one table or room to the next. They're confident, having fun, taking great care of patients, and hearing about their progress. I call these times power hours.

During a conversation with a seminar guest, he told me that "those [power hour] times are all too rare. I wish it could be like that all the time."

"I think I can help with that," I said, as I called a client over to join the conversation. After introductions, I said, "Tell our guest about your power hours." My client's eyes lit up as he described his busy, highest energy, and most enjoyable hours in the clinic.

"Power hours used to happen by accident, but then Noel showed me how to plan for and create them. Now there are four times as many power hours in the practice as when we started," he said.

"That makes practice a lot more fun, doesn't it?" said our seminar guest.

"It's better than that. We added 120 visits a week and cut our stress in half, all due to power hours."

I was quick to add that it also took thought, planning, and discipline to make the change, but my client was just as quick to say that it was well worth the effort – times ten!

My guest looked straight at me and said, "If I get this one thing and nothing else out of the weekend, it'll be worth the trip. Will you teach me what you taught your client?"

“I’d be happy to,” I said.

The following is what I told him, and if you want to help more people, have more fun, and make better money using power hours, read on:

First, let’s get our thinking straight: The best thing that chiropractors can do for their patients is find and remove subluxations, and that doesn’t take very long.

How long it takes to adjust your spouse, kids, or best friend? Probably not very long, and that tells you something about your real adjustment time. Much of the time a patient spends in your office call is lost to lack of training for staff, doctor, and patient, as well as off-purpose socializing – chatting about the weather, sports, your upcoming vacation, or the patient’s new car. When the exchange degenerates into chitchat, you’re not only wasting time, but you’re ruining the doctor-patient relationship.

Patients want you focused on chiropractic and them.

Find out how many patients you can see in an hour by asking your CA to time your next office call. I’m not advocating that you rush people through – *never rush your technique* – but don’t lollygag, either. Find the time that reflects your style.

There is no judgment here about the outcome, just feedback. You don’t want to over- or under-book your power hours. The goal is to replicate the pace you get when you are “in the zone.” We’ll call this your *power hour rate*.

Reality Check: Before you ask your CA to time you, ask them how many patients they feel comfortable booking for you in an hour. If you know you can do great work on ten to twelve (or more) patients an hour, and the CA says five or six, they may be telling you that you waste time.

Now select the three busiest hours you currently have, pack them at capacity based on your power hour rate, and create your first three power hours.

The key to effective power hours is to stay disciplined by following the rules.

Here are the rules: first, stay on purpose, on task, and on time. And second, only do adjustments. Book all of your other procedures at other times.

One of the big enemies of staying on time is the temptation to over-adjust too many segments, too many times. When a patient says, “I don’t think you got it, Doc,” assure them you did, smile, and confirm their next appointment.

When you learn to create and perfect a power hour, you’re primarily training yourself, but you’re also training your patients and your staff. When you get really good at doing a power hour, your CA and your patients will enjoy the time, too. One of my clients, who practices in a large, fast-paced city, tells me that his patients request power hour appointments by name because they know they can get in and out on time.

Reality check: You may be thinking, “I have patients who came from a big practice up the road, and they tell me they left that practice because the doctor didn’t spend enough time with them.” I’ve heard that, too, typically from a patient who wants to train me to spend a lot of unnecessary time rubbing this, checking that, or trying to get me to adjust something again. Frankly, I’d rather have the big practice up the road and have those people see someone else.

Now the game starts: Work with your CA to see how many power hours you can schedule in a week. Regularly ask your staff questions like: *How are my times? How would you grade our power hours? How’s the energy in the office during power hours?*

When the new power hours fill up, add more. Set a goal to add one to two new powers a week.

And remember: creating power hours allows you to give better care, help more people, have more fun, make more money, feel a higher sense of purpose, and demonstrate better leadership and organization. Plus, by guiding patients toward power hours, it leaves other time slots open for more new patients!