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from **Chiropractic ECONOMICS**


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## Get the Facts

Aristotle said, "What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing." From the articles in this issue, here are some extra activities to move you toward your goal of getting into practice:

 **Search online for office space.** If you are searching for office space in a large city, you might want to check online with [www.cityfeet.com](http://www.cityfeet.com). They have commercial real-estate listings available for viewing. Select "medical office" and see what is available in your city.

 **Take a listening-skills test.** Check your ability to listen by taking this online test, [www.studentDC.com/listeningtest](http://www.studentDC.com/listeningtest). Use the results to improve your listening skills in conversations with patients.

 **Get ready for that interview.** From CrackInterview, practice answering 64 questions at [www.studentDC.com/64questions](http://www.studentDC.com/64questions).

## Next Issue Highlights

- ▶ **Buying an office building**
- ▶ **Evaluating an associate contract**
- ▶ **Communicating for success: Write right!**
- ▶ **Creative financing sources for startup**
- ▶ **Project 7: Consider non-chiropractic training and seminars**



## Looking at technique options

Choosing a technique to use in your practice is an important decision, because your technique is a primary determinant for many other choices about your practice. In one respect, your technique defines who you are. When people ask about you as a chiropractor, you'll probably answer, "I'm a Gonstead doctor," or "I have an Activator practice."

For many doctors, their technique also determines their location. Some doctors do a competitive analysis and then locate in areas where there are no other doctors practicing similar techniques.

Your technique is also a major factor in your unique selling proposition (USP), because it sets you apart from other doctors

using other techniques. For these reasons and more, selection of a technique is something that should not be taken lightly.

So how do you choose a technique? Several factors influence most doctors' choice of techniques:

- **Prior experience.** Before you started chiropractic school, you may have had an experience with a chiropractor who used a specific technique that helped you or a member of your family. You may have had conversations with the doctor and other doctors about this technique, and you feel comfortable with it.

- **Technique clubs.** As you scan the variety of clubs at your school, you may see various technique clubs. These are good

*Technique continued on page 3*

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# Narrowing down your location: Choosing a street

Once you have chosen a city to practice in, you have the tough challenge of finding an office. If you are in a small town, there may be only one or two office locations available. In that case, if neither looks good, you may have to consider constructing an office building.

For a new doctor, this is a daunting task, and it increases your loan considerably.

But what if several office locations are available for consideration? The best way to describe this predicament is to state it as a trade-off between advertising and rent. Let's take a real-life scenario as an example:

A recent graduate has been looking at offices and has narrowed his options to two locations. Location A is on the first floor of a three-story office building. The building is on a busy intersection near a large shopping mall. It includes space available on a signboard, but no individual sign is available.

The rent on this office is over \$25 a square foot. Because it is in a newer office building, the build-out (renovation of the office to suit the needs of the new doctor) will be substantial, and could exceed \$30,000.

Location B is an office of the same size several miles away from Location A. It is in a strip mall, at the end, but in a much quieter neighborhood. The neighborhood does not have a Starbucks or McDonald's.



The rent is \$15 a square foot; the build-out will not be expensive because the existing office layout is similar to what the new doctor needs. A large individual sign could be placed along the street.

If the doctor chooses Location A, he will have higher monthly costs and may need a larger startup loan for the build-out, but with the high traffic in the area, he might not have to do as much advertising.

On the other hand, if he chooses Location B, he would have to do more advertising to get people to come to his office, at least until he has a large patient-referral base built up.

## Communicating for success: Listen up!

What did you say? We've all had the experience of trying to explain something to someone, only to have that person ask a question at the end of the explanation that proves they weren't listening.

In order to really communicate, we must listen to others. But listening is difficult. The rate at which someone talks is much slower than our rate of mental processing, with the result that a person can appear to be listening to you while thinking about other things.

We all need to listen better, but this skill is most especially important for chiropractors, because they need to listen to patients.


### WHY SHOULD YOU LISTEN?

- Listening lets patients know you care enough to pay attention.
- Listening helps you understand the patient's point of view.
- Listening gives you important information about the patient's feelings.

Patients want a doctor who is a good listener. In other words, they want their doctor to listen and really understand what they are saying and how they are feeling.

Practicing active listening techniques can improve your relationship with patients, so it's worth the time and energy to do it right.



 If you have not practiced your listening skills in a while, now is the time to do it, particularly if you are nearing the clinical portion of your education. For five listening tips, go to [www.studentDC.com/listeningtips](http://www.studentDC.com/listeningtips).



## Planning to Succeed in Practice: PROJECT 6

### Research local civic and networking organizations

Whether you are moving to a new community or back to your hometown to start a practice, you will need to spend time making contacts. One way is to find local groups to join or give presentations to.

Start now to find out what local groups are in your city so you can be prepared to make contacts as soon as you arrive.



For a list of common local organizations you are likely to find in your community, go to [www.studentDC.com/project6](http://www.studentDC.com/project6).

Once you've identified your local groups, make two lists: The first list is for groups you would like to join; the second list is for groups you would like to speak to.

Limit the groups on your first list to those you feel most passionate about; you don't want to spend all your time on group activities and not have time for your practice and your family.

For your second list, inventory the topics you could speak about. Include general chiropractic subjects, nutrition and wellness, and other topics of interest to general audiences. Avoid direct advertising, but bring business cards to these meetings.

Find a contact name and e-mail address or phone number for each organization you would like to address. Then contact that person and find out the next meeting date or ask if the group would be interested in a speaker. Discuss possible subjects.

Being ready, willing, and able to speak to a group will usually get you a speaking invitation within a few months.

If you are short of funds and having difficulty getting a loan, Location B might be the better choice, because your monthly costs would be lower. If you were willing to work harder to talk to more people to tell them about your practice, you might be able to overcome the drawbacks of the less heavily traveled office location.

Ultimately, your choice of neighborhood is important, but more important is your ability to get out in the community and talk to people and get them to your office. ●



For five more things to consider in selecting an office, go to [www.studentDC.com/choosingstreet](http://www.studentDC.com/choosingstreet).

*Technique continued from page 1*

places to learn about how a specific technique is performed, the science behind that technique, and the types of patients who can be helped by this technique.

● **Seminars and workshops.** It seems chiropractic students learn as much out of class, at seminars and workshops on specific techniques, as they do in class — and this is perfectly appropriate. No school has the resources to offer all techniques to all students.

Take advantage of on-campus seminars or seminars put on by technique organizations to learn more about them. When you listen to speakers, spend time to learn more about the people who are heading the technique. Are they the type of people with whom you want to be associated?

● **Your own personality and practice methodology.** As you progress in chiropractic college, you gain more insight and experience, and you hear a variety of opinions from faculty and speakers about techniques. The final decision about which technique to use often comes from own personal feelings, which may be difficult to analyze, but are still of primary importance.

Consider:

● Evidence behind the technique. (Some techniques are more

evidence-based than others. This may help you explain the benefits of a technique to patients.);

- Types of patients served by that technique; and
- Varieties of conditions that can be helped by that technique.

Finally, consider adding a “toolkit” of techniques to your skill set, so you can offer a variety of techniques to suit different patients with different needs. Keep an open mind about the techniques available to you, and don't commit to one until you have explored them all. Listen carefully, ask tough questions, and go with what you feel is right. ●

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# Why should I hire you? A question for associates

Many graduates decide not to begin their chiropractic careers by starting a solo practice, either because they are unsure of their business abilities or because they want to hone their chiropractic skills and abilities.

If you are in that situation, you are probably considering an associate (employee) position with a chiropractic practice.

In that case, you'll need to sell yourself to prospective employers, just as you would if you were in any other profession.

First, prepare a resume (or CV) and cover letter. Then, mail your resume and cover letter to prospective employers. In some cases, you'll be responding to an ad for a specific position. Otherwise, you can send letters to many chiropractors in an area, presenting yourself and your credentials.

Finally, you'll be asked to interview with the chiropractors.

Remember, you have much to offer a chiropractic practice — in your recent experiences and training, in your youth and enthusiasm, and in your positive attitude and ability to talk to

patients. Ultimately, you will gain a great position in an office that fits your needs and provides you with a superior experience. ●



There's more online! Read the full version of this article to learn three important points to remember as you interview and nine ways to present a professional image. See it at [www.studentDC.com/whyhire](http://www.studentDC.com/whyhire).

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