

RIPPLE · OWNER-DEPENDENCE SCORECARD

# The Treadmill Test

---

*How dependent is your practice on you?*

---

Most chiropractic owners discover they've quietly built themselves a job, not a business. The schedule depends on their hands. The closes depend on their voice. The marketing depends on their face. The decisions depend on their phone. They are technically the owner. Operationally, they're the bottleneck.

The Treadmill Test scores the five layers where owner-dependence usually hides — clinical, sales, marketing, operations, and team leadership. In about ten minutes, you'll know which layer is costing you the most freedom, and where the highest-leverage work is.

*If you didn't come in for a week starting Monday — what would break?*

## How to take it

- Read each of the 15 statements on the next two pages.
- Score yourself 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly disagree (the statement isn't true of your practice) and 5 = strongly agree (the statement is very true of your practice).
- Be honest. The point isn't to feel good — it's to find the truth.
- Add the 5 dimension subtotals to get your overall Treadmill Score.
- Read your personalized result on the last page.

The scale is intentionally negative-framed. Higher scores mean more dependence, not more freedom. The goal isn't a high score. The goal is to know.

## THE 15 STATEMENTS

## Score yourself, 1 to 5

1 = strongly disagree · 2 = mostly disagree · 3 = sometimes / depends · 4 = mostly agree · 5 = strongly agree

## DIMENSION 1

## Clinical Dependence

How much of the actual clinical product runs through your hands and your hands only?

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. If I didn't come in tomorrow, my schedule would have to be canceled or rebooked.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I'm the only provider who can deliver our signature services or specialty protocols.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Patients book specifically with me — most would not accept seeing another provider in my clinic.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Dimension subtotal (sum of your scores above):</b>	<b>_____ / 15</b>				

## DIMENSION 2

## Sales &amp; Communication Dependence

How dependent is the practice on your personal voice in the room when money is on the line?

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
4. I personally conduct every — or nearly every — Day 2 / Report of Findings conversation.	1	2	3	4	5
5. New-patient conversion rates drop noticeably when I'm not the one presenting the care plan.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When patients hesitate on financials or care recommendations, only I can resolve the conversation effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Dimension subtotal (sum of your scores above):</b>	<b>_____ / 15</b>				

**DIMENSION 3****Marketing & Patient Acquisition Dependence**

*How much of the patient pipeline lives in your face, your relationships, and your personal effort?*

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
7. The practice's main referral pipeline runs through my personal relationships (community ties, networking, B2B contacts).	1	2	3	4	5
8. I'm the one writing, approving, or directly running our marketing — without me, marketing would stall within a month.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The practice's online presence (videos, social, content) is primarily my face and my voice.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Dimension subtotal (sum of your scores above):</b>	_____ / 15				

**DIMENSION 4****Operations & Decision Dependence**

*How many routine decisions still flow through you that someone else could be making correctly?*

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
10. Routine operational questions (vendor calls, scheduling exceptions, patient complaints) get routed to me even when others could decide.	1	2	3	4	5
11. There are no documented systems, SOPs, or playbooks the team can actually follow for our most important processes.	1	2	3	4	5
12. If I were unreachable for a week, multiple recurring decisions would be delayed or made incorrectly.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Dimension subtotal (sum of your scores above):</b>	_____ / 15				

**DIMENSION 5**

**Team & Leadership Dependence**

*How much of the team's performance and culture is held together by your presence in the building?*

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
13. Team performance noticeably drops when I'm not physically in the office.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I'm the only person who can resolve conflict, handle a difficult staff conversation, or correct underperformance.	1	2	3	4	5
15. The culture of the practice is held together by my presence — I am the standard, the energy, and the accountability.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Dimension subtotal (sum of your scores above):</b>	<b>_____ / 15</b>				

<b>YOUR TREADMILL SCORE</b>	<b>_____ / 75</b>
-----------------------------	-------------------

*(Add the five dimension subtotals.) Turn the page for your result.*

## YOUR RESULT

## What Your Score Means

Find your score range below. Read it slowly.

<b>15 – 30</b>	<p><b>You've Built a Real Business</b></p> <p>Most chiropractic owners would trade places with you. The practice doesn't need you to function. You're a CEO, not a captive. The work from here is protecting what you've built — making sure the next decision, the next hire, the next program doesn't drag you back onto the floor. The temptation when things drift is to step in personally. Don't.</p>
<b>31 – 45</b>	<p><b>Partial Captive</b></p> <p>There are real layers of independence in your practice and there are real layers of dependence. Look at your dimension subtotals: the highest one is your bottleneck, and it's the highest-leverage thing to fix this quarter. You don't need to overhaul everything. You need to pick the most expensive layer of dependence and systemize it deliberately. Then the next one.</p>
<b>46 – 60</b>	<p><b>You're On The Treadmill</b></p> <p>The practice technically belongs to you, but operationally, it owns you. You probably can't take a real week off, and you almost certainly can't take two. This is fixable — most practices we work with start here — but it requires deliberate, sequenced work over months, not a weekend. The fastest path forward: pick the dimension with the highest subtotal and treat it like a project, not a feeling.</p>
<b>61 – 75</b>	<p><b>A High-Performance Job, Not A Business</b></p> <p>You haven't built a business yet — you've built a high-performance job for yourself. The good news: this is the most common starting point for chiropractic owners, and you're not alone or broken. The bad news: nothing else gets easier until you address this. Marketing more, hiring more, working more — none of it works at this score. The work starts with deciding which kind of practice you actually want to own, and then beginning the slow, deliberate decoupling of your hands from the business.</p>

---

### Whatever your score:

Look at your five dimension subtotals before you read your overall result. The dimension with your highest subtotal is the layer where you're most trapped — and the place where the next 90 days of focused work will produce the biggest return.

That dimension isn't a personal failing. It's a structural opening. Most owners never look. You just did.

## WHERE TO START

# What to do with your score

### **If your highest dimension was Clinical Dependence (1)**

Start with one signature protocol that only you currently deliver, and document it well enough that a trained associate or specialized team member could run it. You don't need a full clinical SOP library overnight. You need one. Then the next.

### **If your highest dimension was Sales & Communication Dependence (2)**

Record your next Day 2 / Report of Findings. Listen back, alone, with a notebook. Identify what you do that nobody else has been trained to do. That's not your gift — that's the script you've never written down. Until you write it, only you can run it.

### **If your highest dimension was Marketing & Patient Acquisition (3)**

Audit the patient pipeline for the last 90 days. For each new patient, write down how they found you. The percentage that came through your personal relationships is the percentage of your pipeline that can't be hired out. The rest can be systemized.

### **If your highest dimension was Operations & Decisions (4)**

Track every decision routed to you for one week. At the end, sort them into three piles: had to be me, could've been my office manager, could've been handled by a documented policy. The second and third piles together are your project list.

### **If your highest dimension was Team & Leadership (5)**

Stop trying to motivate the team. Start defining what good performance specifically looks like for each role — written down, measurable, and reviewed weekly. Culture isn't your energy. Culture is the standard you hold the room to, even when you're not in it.

---

### **A note from Dr. Matt**

If your score was higher than you expected — that's actually a useful day. Most owners go years without naming the gap between what they think their practice is and what their practice actually is. You just closed that gap in ten minutes.

My wife and I run The Disc Doctor, a fee-for-service spine clinic, and I work with other owners through Ripple Consulting & Development. If something in your result landed, and you want to talk through what the next 90 days could look like for the layer where you're most trapped, I'd welcome a conversation. There's no script on the call. No urgency stack. Just a conversation about your practice.

## CreateMyRipple.com

— Dr. Matt