

The clinical importance of neutral spinal positioning

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Pain and tension in the neck, back and shoulders can be caused by any number of underlying conditions and factors. These include but are not limited to traumas both new and old, repetitive motion injuries, stress, poor posture, osteoarthritis, and congenital spinal malformations. According to Thomas A. Sousa, DC, DABCSP “the approach to a patient’s musculoskeletal complaint is a standardized, often sequential search for what can and cannot be managed by the examining doctor”.⁽¹⁾

When a patient presents to any health care provider that provider must first determine if it is appropriate for them to treat the patient and if so what is the best approach. The approach will differ depending on the treating health care provider. The medical approach will tend to include the use of muscle relaxors, pain killers, and possibly a referral for physical therapy. A physical therapist’s approach will most likely include the use of physiotherapies such as heat, EMS, ultrasound, passive stretching, massage, and exercise. Chiropractors first and foremost will perform a Chiropractic Manipulative Treatment or CMT also called an adjustment. They may also include the same physiotherapies done by a Physical Therapist provided it is allowed by scope.

All patients no matter who the health care provider is should be provided with at home instructions. These may include the use of ice, heat, a TENS unit, stretches, exercises

and gentle massage. While all of these are important factors in helping a patient heal, postural factors are also extremely important. According to Thomas A. Sousa, DC, DABCSP “Postural advice regarding work and every day posture is considered and important adjunct by many chiropractors.”⁽¹⁾ The focus should be to maintain a neutral head position.”

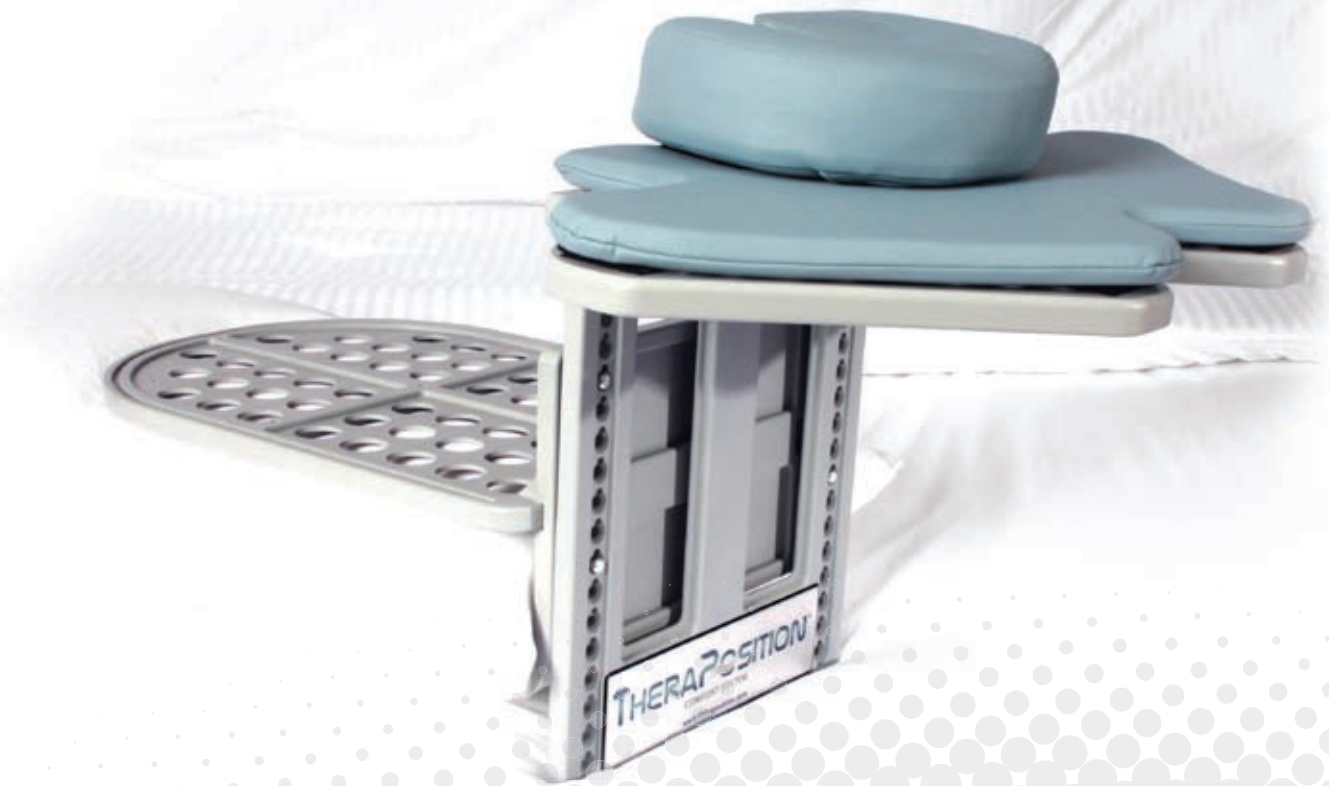
The problem that arises at home when a patient is using therapies such as ice, heat, TENS, etc. is unlike in the chiropractic or physical therapists office they cannot keep their cervical spine in a neutral position. This is where the TheraPosition™ System comes in. It will enable the patient to lie face up or down as they would on a therapy table keeping the cervical spine in a relaxed neutral position while they follow their at home instructions. This in turn will allow the muscles of the spine to relax making the therapy more effective. The patient could even sleep in the prone position using the TheraPosition™ System without any undue stress on the cervical spine. ■

REFERENCE

1. Differential Diagnosis and Management for the Chiropractor. Protocols and Algorithms. Thomas A. Sousa, DC, DABCSP

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