

## **Introducing a New Avenue for Neck and Back Pain Suffers – ATM2**

By: Jennifer Watson, MSPT

Is immediate relief of neck or back pain even possible? With spinal pain being the primary orthopedic reason why people visit their physician it is a question worthy of addressing.

Many approaches can be taken to relieve spinal pain with conventional physical therapy being one of them. Responses to therapy can vary with slow or initial progress being a common frustration for patients and therapists alike. Even with improvements in care of physical therapy provided by years of research and development, the clinician rarely sees patients leave the office on their first day totally pain-free. The ATM-2 (Active Therapeutic Movements) has provided a new standard for the therapist and patient, seeing immediate relief.

The ATM-2s concept is based on two main theories: repositioning (Mulligan concept) and compression. By simultaneously repositioning or compressing a body area or joint, painful movements can become immediately pain-free. For example, by repositioning and compressing the pelvis, lumbar flexion in many conditions can become pain-free. When painful movements become pain-free the central nervous system (CNS) perceives relief and transitions from an injured state to a normal muscle activation pattern.

The ATM-2 is a vertical treatment table that allows treatment in a weight-bear position. The repositioning and compression concept is obtained by stabilization belts. Once the pain-free “holding” is found the ATMs are performed in a neutral-range towards the impaired and previously painful movement. The CNS, at this point, continues to memorize the new muscle activation pattern.

What is so significant about the ATM-2 is that treatment takes only a few minutes and can make profound changes for the patient. In addition to immediate pain-relief and increased range of motion, a series of treatments can result in long-term resolve of symptoms. Improved athletic performance can also be seen secondary to the increased range of motion and strength caused by the change in muscle activation pattern. Whether the patient’s goal is to decrease pain or throw a ball faster, the vertical treatment table provides a functional position that allows for a smoother and quicker transition to activities of daily living and sports.

The flexibility of the ATM-2 can be seen in the immediate pain relief it can give to several body regions including: hip, back, neck, shoulder, knee, and pelvis; and diagnoses of musculoskeletal origin including: arthritis, DDD, DJD, HNP, scoliosis, osteoporosis, to muscle/ligament strains. Those patients with neurological disorders such as stroke or SCI can also benefit. As in any treatment, however, contraindications are present and would be discussed and cleared by the physician and physical therapist.

The ATM-2 is a new and effective approach to those suffering from spinal pain. The results are often immediate and significant. The goal of every physical therapist is to relieve pain and improve a patient’s quality of life. The ATM-2 will not only compliment other tools that provide relief but allow the therapist to do it in an even more effective and efficient way.

References:

[www.backproject.com](http://www.backproject.com)

Connecticut School for Integrative Manual Therapy

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