



**PRO·MOTION**  
PHYSICAL THERAPY

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# Case Studies



## Patient Profile

### Patient:

A 39-year-old female

### Symptoms:

This sales and administration professional began experiencing constant upper cervical spine pain and intermittent daily headaches that began in the occipital area and projected to the back of her left eye, along with TMJ pain. The symptoms worsened when she drove or sat at her computer. The pain built up gradually over 2 years and had continued for a decade.

### Additional background:

The patient underwent four sessions of McKenzie-based physical therapy. Several physicians treated her with an assortment of pain medications over a 10-year period – everything from naproxyn and zanaflex to neurontin and antidepressants. Finally, she was referred to Pro-Motion for manipulative-based physical therapy.

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## Manipulative therapy resolves even longstanding pain that has responded only slightly to powerful pain medications.

### Initial assessment

A Pro-Motion therapist determined pain with active range-of-motion cervical spine rotation and side flexion. Passive range-of-motion testing identified the left C2-3 facet joint as reproducing the cervical spine, headache and TMJ pain. The sub-occipital muscles of the cervical spine were in spasm, and the deep cervical spine stabilizing muscles had poor activation.

### Treatment Protocol

The patient was treated with specific manual joint mobilization to the C2-3 facet joint. Stretches to the sub-occipital muscles of the cervical spine and specific activation exercises of the deep cervical spine core stabilizing muscles. The patient received postural re-education for work and while driving.

### Treatment Outcome

The woman attended just eight physical therapy sessions at Pro-Motion Physical Therapy and achieved full resolution of the cervical spine, headache and TMJ pain. She reported full cervical spine active and passive range of motion. The sub-occipital muscles had full extensibility and there was good activation of the cervical spine deep core stabilizers. Her Neck Disability Index score at beginning of treatment was 52%, considered severe disability, and at the time of discharge was 5%, which is well below mild disability on the index score.

*(The Neck Disability Index Score: mild = 10 – 28%; moderate = 30 – 48%; severe = 50 – 68%; complete = 72% or higher)*

### Conclusion

The patient had an excellent response to the manipulative therapy approach, both by her own account and according to her Neck Disability Index score. Just eight visits helped her achieve complete relief from cervical spine, headache and TMJ pain that had plagued her for 10 years. She returned to a high level of function that she hadn't enjoyed for years.

### Discussion

Evidence-based treatment such as manual joint mobilization has been proven to relieve even extreme joint pain in a short period of time – just eight visits for 10 years of unresolved pain, in this case. This approach allows joints to return to normal range of motion without pain, after which strengthening exercises and postural re-education can allow patients to return to their previous high level of function. This and other world-class care allows Pro-Motion to help patients quickly resolve pain and return to their active lifestyles.

We use exercises tailored to patients' individual lifestyles and needs to help achieve their goals. Just as important as getting patients healthy again, we spend time on education so they know how to enjoy many years of health and comfort without reinjury.

**For questions or further discussion of the findings in this case study – or to refer a patient to Pro-Motion Physical Therapy, call 815-521-4400.**