

## **First Step to Stopping Neck Pain. The Magic Spot (T1 to T7)**

The first step to stopping neck pain does not even involve the neck. Rather it involves the spine right below the neck (what we refer to as levels T1 to T7).



We have found throughout our physical therapy careers working with patients that the magic spot (T1-T7), if held in poor posture, can greatly affect the neck and neck pain. In fact, poor positioning of T1 through T7 can frequently lead to neck pain.

How does this happen? If T1 through T7 are in a slumped, rounded forward type of posture (which is quite common), they will adversely affect the positioning of the neck. You cannot put the neck in proper position if T1-T7 are in an improper position.



In addition, if T1-T7 are in a slumped, flexed position they will also adversely affect the position of the shoulder blades. Shoulder blades, when out of position, can contribute to neck pain or even cause neck pain by putting increased stress on the levator scapular muscle which attaches to the shoulder blades and the neck.

We call it the magic spot because it can cause neck pain, but it also can take it away.

Improve the posture of T1-T7 and you will improve the posture of the neck and the positioning of the shoulder blades. All of that will lead you to less neck pain. Fail to treat the “Magic Spot” and your neck pain may just keep coming back.

How to treat T1- T7. This area can be tough to stretch. A lot of heavy ligaments and muscles hold the vertebra together.

To begin stretching this area we are going to recommend using a tennis ball, lacrosse ball, or softball. We will start you leaning your back against the wall. Put the ball into a long sock. The handle of the sock will allow you to position the ball between the spine and the shoulder blade. There are 6 designated spots we want you to stretch or mobilize. See photo or video. With the ball in place, you can roll up down on the ball versus making wall angels with your arms. You can also just lift your arms above your head. Repeat on all 6 spots.



(repeat on left side)



After you have become comfortable with those stretches and able to easily tolerate you should begin doing the same stretches with the ball on the floor. If

that is too aggressive you can put a towel over the ball to blunt the force of it. Eventually you can get rid of the towel. You might even progress to use of a back pod. The back pod is a device created solely for this purpose. It is exceptionally durable, but it is also somewhat expensive.



*Brad and I use our respective back pods religiously.*