

McKenzie Therapy For Non-Surgical Treatment Of The Cervical Herniated Disc

McKenzie therapy is a specialized form of physical therapy that works with certain exercises and teaching you how to do those exercises on your own as treatment for your cervical herniated disc. I had a chance to talk with a licensed McKenzie therapist, Hema, and get her impressions about what she does with McKenzie therapy to treat the cervical herniated disc.

In McKenzie exercises, their strategy is to help patients be their own therapists, which means that the patients can self-treat themselves. It does not have a lot of hands on, it does have some amount of hands on from the therapist itself when the patient cannot achieve or progress towards their goals of getting their range back. It was developed by Robin McKenzie, who is a New Zealand-based physical therapist in late 1950s and he developed this concept and an institution called MDT. The people or common public thinks McKenzie exercises all are extension exercises, is backward bending, looking backwards, but it is really not. It is a comprehensive way of evaluating patient and finding out how are the symptoms progressing, how are the symptoms affecting them, and what causes their pain.

Que 1: So this is part of McKenzie, this is what you would do as part of the evaluation or as part of the treatment?

Ans 1: _____ evaluation. It so becomes treatment, so that I evaluate and I see that doing this actually makes their pain go lower, this will be the treatment to begin with.

Que 2: And then they will do this at home?

Ans 2: Yes, and as we are doing this, if they can do more and more about 20 or 30 and they bend as far as they could go and the pain has calmed down, then we could change a little bit more, so right now you see there is a small towel below her head because this is where she is comfortable. So when this phase changes and she feels better, just doing 20 or 25 of those, the pain starts to centralize or lower down and if she can tolerate it, I am just going to take this towel off and see if she can lay flat on the bed and see if she could do a little bit more, so which means we are trying to get more extension or retraction as much as possible within her pain limit.

Que 3: So the McKenzie exercises appear to be very gentle and slow?

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Ans 3: Yes, and because the patient does on their own and they can control how much mobility they are going to do and how far they are going to move, there is no over-pressure on the patient, so it is very gentle and as they move on, it becomes, you know, more a larger range to regain their range of motion and centralize their pain along with regaining their range of motions.

Que 4: So it seems very safe and comfortable for the patient.

Ans 4: Yes and it is a self-treatment of course. The physician or the physical therapist guides the patient to do which exercise and how many and how many times they should be doing and how far they can go and the patient is instructed upon their symptoms, whether _____ go down more than the arm as they are doing it, then we tell them to stop that exercise and get back to the therapist and, you know, talk to them. I did these exercises at home, I feel like my arm pain is increasing, then the approach changes and then we reassess and see if it is actually causing, you know pain down the arm, then we will make it a little bit easier for them or change the exercises so it does not cause peripheralization.

The bottom line is that McKenzie therapy may offer benefit for you if you have a cervical herniated disc. Make sure you get a good qualified and licensed McKenzie therapist to do this because this is detailed work. You will know within a week or two whether it is for you and if you are getting better, you can continue. If not, then move on to another type of therapy.

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