

# easing pain with physical therapy

## marsha's story

By Adam Field, P.T.

When Marsha moved to Buffalo she looked for a practitioner to help ease her pain. Originally from New York City, she had undergone myofascial release, a hands-on technique to reduce pain and increase mobility. Marsha said she was looking for a practitioner in Buffalo that could perform the therapy successfully to ease her pain.

Confined to a wheelchair, Marsha was extremely anxious as her son wheeled her into my office. At age 60, Marsha had also been treated with craniosacral therapy, a method of easing pain and tension through gentle manipulations of the skull that had given her relief in the past

"Since I've moved I don't feel like the practitioners I've seen have taken enough time with me. I have really bad neck pain that goes down both my arms, and headaches that last for weeks. My legs are very weak, and I don't think I can get on your table," said Marsha.

Marsha was relieved when I told her we could perform some of the treatment she required while she remained in her wheelchair, and I began working. Like many of my older patients, Marsha spent prolonged periods of time sitting. "You look like you're in a tug-of-war with your own body," I said. "There's so much tension at the upper part of your chest dragging your head forward."

After transferring Marsha to my table, I positioned her on her side placing a soft wedge under her upper body, and began myofascial work to her mid and lower back. I also performed deep-tissue massage to her lumbar area, and applied a moist heat pack between her shoulder blades. When I turned Marsha to her other side and focused again on her lower back, she winced in pain indicating a tender area in her upper lumbar region, which she said radiated up to her neck.

I then positioned Marsha on her back, applied a traction force to the base of her skull, and placed my ring fingers on her second cervical vertebrae. I said, "Take a long slow breath and give me your head as if I could pull it off your body. I won't drop you."

Suddenly, there was a significant release, and Marsha was as surprised as I was. The tight tissue attached to the base of her skull relaxed and she immediately seemed to sink into my table. After I helped her up and into her wheelchair, she was surprised by the ease of movement she experienced in her neck. I then instructed her in four stretches to maintain her flexibility. She said, "I was afraid you wouldn't be able to treat me. I am so glad I found you."



**About the Author:** Adam Field is a physical therapist with more than 10 years of experience in providing hands-on manual physical therapy, using craniosacral therapy and myofascial release for treating chronic pain. Adam's practice is located at the JCC Benderson Building, 2640 North Forest Road, Getzville, NY 14068. To book an appointment with Adam please call 716-982-8200 or visit [www.adamfieldphysicaltherapy.com](http://www.adamfieldphysicaltherapy.com).

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