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SPINE  
DISORDERS**

## WHY AND HOW DO HANDS-ON TECHNIQUES REMAIN USEFUL FOR NON-SPECIFIC NECK PAIN?

**GROSDENT STÉPHANIE**

Neck pain is one of the most common musculoskeletal conditions worldwide, and is associated with a high socio-economic burden in terms of diagnosis, management, and work disability. Non-specific neck pain (NS-NP) can be defined as "pain perceived in the posterior region of the cervical spine, between the superior nuchal line and the first thoracic spinous process, without a known pathological basis as the underlying cause of the complaints". Current evidence suggests that manual therapy is effective in reducing pain and improving function in patients with NS-NP. Manual therapists use various hands-on techniques, such as mobilization and manipulation of the cervical and/or thoracic spine, soft tissue and myofascial techniques, and neural mobilization to manage non-specific NP. The effects of these techniques can vary depending on the specific technique and the individual's condition but generally include the following: improving range of motion, decreasing muscle spasm and pain, breaking adhesions, removing cellular exudates, and improving circulation. Although there are many hypotheses regarding the mechanisms of action of manual techniques, the prevailing thought suggests that these mechanisms are multifaceted and include specific and non-specific factors related to the intervention, patient, provider, and environment in which the intervention is provided. Manual therapy hands-on techniques are recommended for acute and chronic NS-NP to improve range of motion, activate pain modulation mechanisms, and prepare more active treatments. However, a multimodal and tailored approach based on manual techniques, therapeutic exercises, and pain education appears to be the best therapeutic weapon for patients with NS-NP.

### Biography



*Stéphanie Grosdent is a Sports Physiotherapist and Manual Therapist. She accomplished her PhD in Motricity Sciences at the University of Liège. Currently, she is working as a part time associate Professor at the Department of Sport and Rehabilitation Sciences (EVAREVA) in the University of Liège. Stéphanie is also has many clinical experience, as she works as a physiotherapist at the Liège University Hospital Centre. There, she is specialized in treatment and rehabilitation for acute and chronic, back pain, neck pain and whiplash associated disorders. She is involved in several manual therapy and sports therapy educational programs and is the (co-)author of 25 peer-reviewed papers. Last but not least, she is a board member of the Belgium Association for Manual Therapy (MATHERA.be) and the Belgian Back Society (BBS).*