

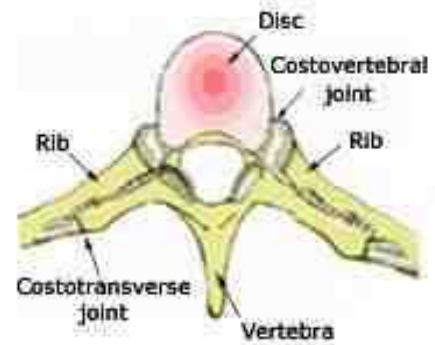
Costovertebral Joint Fixation

Costovertebral joints are the articulations connecting the rib heads and the thoracic vertebrae bodies. Joining the ribs and the vertebrae happens at two different places, the tubercle of the rib and the head. Two convex facets out of the head connect to the two adjacent vertebrae, which forms a gliding joint. The joint is strengthened from the head of the ligament and the intercapital ligament.

Costovertebral Joint Fixation Anatomy

At the various levels of the spine, the ribs are connected with the corresponding vertebrae on the right and with small joints on the left. The rib joints ranging from the second to the tenth vertebrae in the upper part of the back are comprised of the costovertebral and costotransverse joints located in the back of the vertebrae. They provide you with stability to the chest wall and the upper back. Ligaments support the joints, which provide you with strength to the bone junctions and limit joint movement in the upper part of the back.

In basic terms, the joint can become stuck or locked. This is most likely due to gross stiffness in the upper back (thoracic spine) but can also be caused by rib subluxation. Then this happens, inflammation can occur causing a sharp pain. The location of the pain is typically just lateral to the spine, and usually between the spine and the shoulder blade (scapula).



How to Treat Costovertebral Joint Fixation:

1. Physical Therapy

By going through physical therapy on a regular basis, you can help to strengthen and loosen the joints that surround the back and the neck area. Performing a series of exercises will help prevent muscle and joint strain and injury. Expect to partake in two to three sessions over the course of six weeks or more. Depending on the severity of the injury, the length of time to recover will vary accordingly.

2. Chiropractic Adjustments

Going to the chiropractor for an adjustment tends to be one of the most common type of treatment used. Any disorders and dysfunctions that are related to the vertebral column can normally be treated with visits to the chiropractor. Osteopathic manipulation is also very useful at “unlocking” the costovertebral joint.

3. Active Release Techniques

When active release techniques and shockwave therapy are combined, they can help to address any dysfunctions and injuries in the joint. Manual treatments are the gold standard for spinal and rib injuries. This treatment will help to correct the factors that caused the injury, which alters the biomechanics of the ribs, chest, neck, shoulders and spine. Without correcting the biomechanics using manual therapy, the injury will become more chronic and self-perpetuating.

Tips:

- Physical therapy is used to alleviate pain and inflammation and improve mobility to the upper back and ribs.
- An ice pack placed over the painful rib can reduce inflammation – get advice from your therapist.
- Based upon the severity of the injury, condition or disease, you might need to work on your strength, endurance, flexibility, balance and coordination.
- Women who are pregnant often end up finding they are suffering from the condition due to the added stress and looseness of the joints.
- Repetitive strain and poor posture from a job can cause costovertebral joint fixation.
- Avoid sitting in one position or slumping forward for an extended period of time to prevent extra stress on the joints.