

What is an Orthopedic Support Pillow?

1. **Orthopedic Support Pillows:** *Support pillows are designed to help a. correct and b. maintain proper cervical posture/alignment while sleeping by providing the right amount of resistive feedback into the cervical & upper thoracic musculature.*

Special Note: Support type pillows are orthotic devices (like a custom orthotic in your shoe) and therefore may take time to get accustomed to. Healthcare providers should give patients proper education regarding the time needed for training the musculature in accepting the pillow. Although some people can react positively to this type of pillow immediately, others may take up to 2 weeks of gradual increased use through the night. Patient should use pillow to waking tolerance and then switch to previous pillow for the rest of the night. Each successive night, patient should increase time support pillow is used through the night.

Examples: Tri-Core Standard; Tri-Core Gentle; Double Core & Double Core Select Pillows.

1. **Correct:** *Helps eliminate symptoms by treating the cause of the condition.* Helps correct the cause of pain, supports treatment to regain proper function. At this stage, orthopedic pillows are often prescribed to assist in correcting the diagnosed condition and to help the patient regain proper function. Allows tissue to heal functionally. Prepares for the maintenance stage. Corrective pillows can help alleviate headaches; neck muscle and joint strains, arthritis and whiplash discomfort and help restore proper nerve function. Supportive pillows are used in this stage of care.
2. **Maintain:** *Ensures continued good health by helping sustain the body in its proper, natural posture.* Complements care to help prevent recurrence/progression. Pillows selected for the Maintain Stage should ensure continued good health by providing proper positioning and helping preserve the natural curvature of the neck and spine. For ideal maintenance, the pillow should provide maximum support and comfort. In fact, most people discover that once the normal curvature of the neck is restored, they crave the comfort of maximum support - the reason supportive pillows have grown more popular. Supportive pillows are used in this stage of care.

Orthopedic Pillow Uses

Natural placement of the head and neck, accomplished with the many different styles and shapes of Core cervical pillows, can help relieve intense pain by providing natural and correct posturing in supine (back) and side-sleeping positions.

Cervical support pillows are used when a cervical hypolordosis (less than normal curvature of the spine) exists, to prevent hypolordosis, or when cervical spasms or strains occur. These pillows are orthotic devices (apparatus used to align or support) used to help relieve spasms, remove minor tensions and maintain or resume the natural cervical lordotic curve while at rest.

By providing proper neck support, cervical pillows can help with:

- Neck muscle and joint strains and sprains
- Tension headaches
- Whiplash injuries
- Arthritis
- Morning hand stiffness and swelling
- Temporomandibular disorders
- Stiffness
- Snoring (in some cases)

Differences in Pillow Materials

1. **Fiber:** Allows for comfort and support. High quality fiber is blown to exact specification to insure uniform distribution and pillow weight.
 - Originally used to emulate features of natural down pillows & used in comfort for accommodation.
 - Advances in fiber have resulted in great ability to comfort & support.
 - Core Pillows use conjugated fiber which acts like a spring.
 - During manufacturing, high pressure will link fibers together & different resiliency levels can be created in the pillow. This process helps fiber stay in place and resists migration, yielding consistent support as fiber generally has amorphous tendencies and can clump or rat tail during cleaning.
 - Foam can offer the most consistent support but Fiber currently can offer almost as much but with more comfort.
 - Fiber material is available in wide array of sizes, shapes & coatings.
 - Has ability to perform as either a semi-solid or semi-fluid.
 - Polyester fiber has natural flame retardance & durability.

Special Note: There other types of orthopedic pillows. Besides **Support Pillows**, there is also **Accommodate/Displacement Pillows**. These pillows are designed to ***help relieve pain or discomfort by conforming to and stabilizing an existing condition***. Relieves pain or discomfort by conforming to and stabilizing a new or existing injury or condition. Provides comfort, but does little to correct the condition.

Typically for short-term use. When a neck injury or condition is *acute* (serious or to an intense degree, like whiplash or a significant sprain or strain), the healthcare provider's goal is to relieve a patient's pain and discomfort before beginning treatment. What's needed is to stabilize and accommodate the condition before moving forward. The same is true for other neck injuries or at the onset of many common problems which affect the head and neck. Accommodation/Displacement pillows work well at this stage because they conform to the condition and provide immediate comfort.

Examples: Core Deluxe Water Pillow; Core Memory Foam Pillow

*****Please ask your healthcare provider which is the most appropriate pillow for you.**