

# 21st CENTURY BACK CARE

Words:  
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With back pain blighting the lives of so many of us, and the fact that many of the treatments offered can promise no long term relief for the condition, perhaps it's time to look at a revolutionary new approach to the problem.

Edinburgh's 21st Century Back Care is Scotland's only clinic dedicated to the use of TAMARS (Technology Assisted Micro-Mobilisation and Reflex Stimulation) for the treatment of chronic and acute back and neck pain.

The hand-held, computer console-controlled TAMARS device acts like a 'bionic hand' as it administers a safe, drug free and non-surgical full spinal treatment that frees and straightens the vertebrae – a process that had previously been deemed medically impossible.

I asked Jeff Knox, a sports injury specialist who heads up the clinic to tell me more about this fascinating procedure.

He told me: 'I had suffered with neck problems since I was about 14, and was basically at the point where my neck was very stiff and uncomfortable all the time. I was having chiropractic treatment, which would help in the short term but after a week or so the problem was as bad as ever.'

'After reading about TAMARS I went to London to find out more and to get a treatment myself. One thing about the treatment that stood out straight away was that my whole spine was examined, not just the area of my neck that was sore. It showed that I had a scoliosis of the spine, which basically means that instead of my spine

being in a straight line from top to bottom it looked more like an S-shaped curve. Therefore, no matter what work was done to free up my neck, the twist in the rest of my spine would cause the same problem to reoccur.

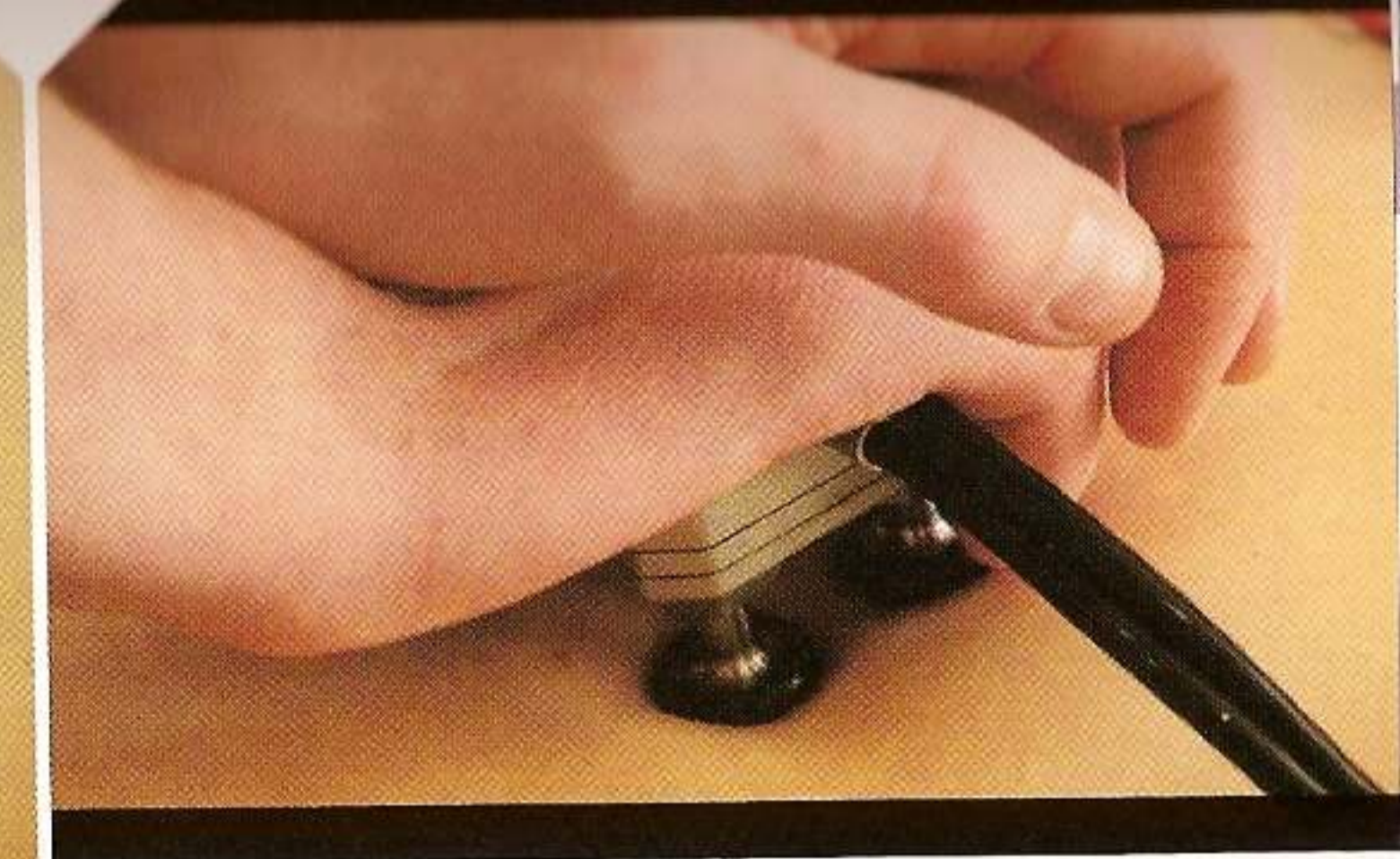
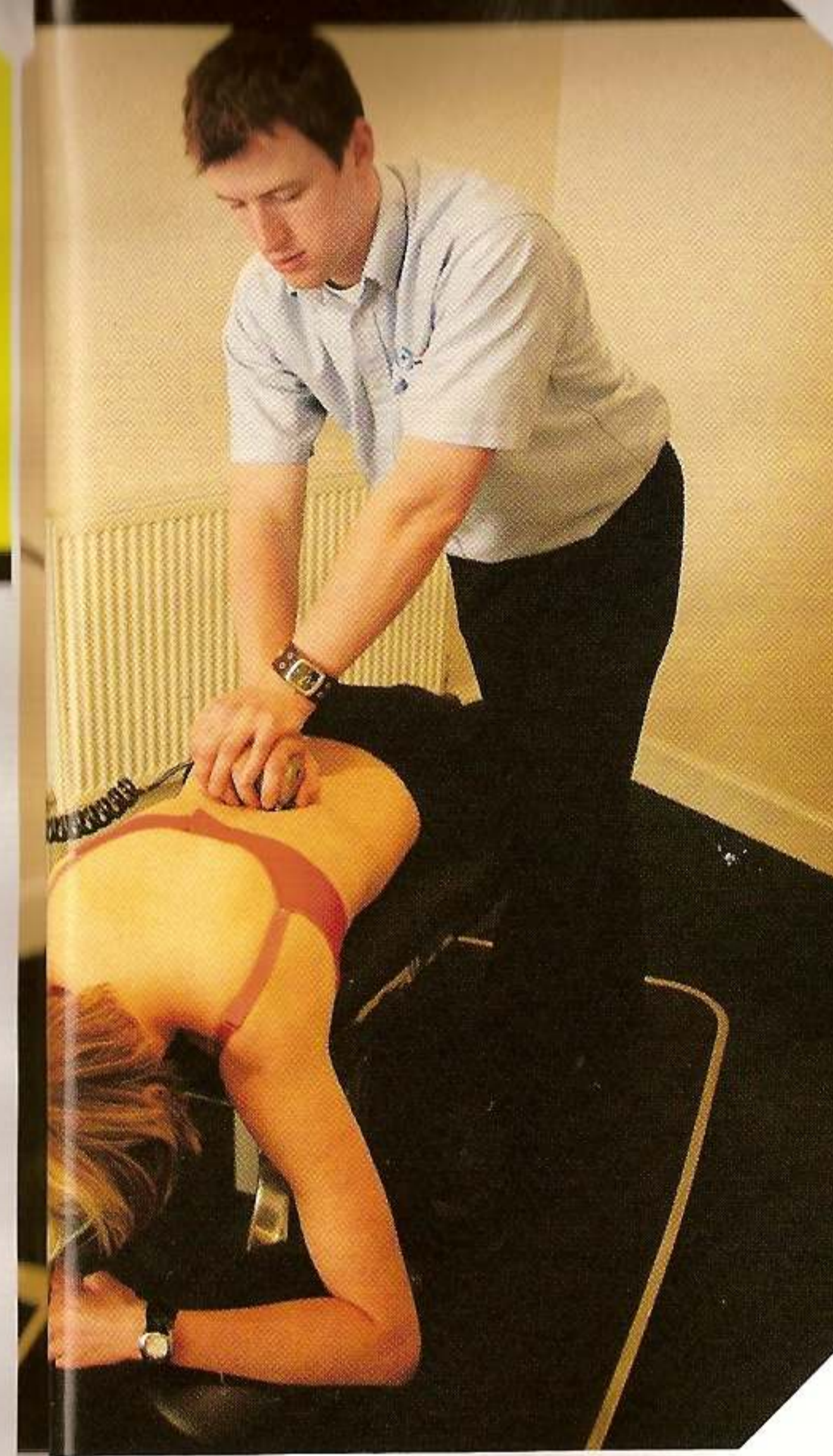
'After the first session my neck felt much freer and on top of this, the rest of my spine also felt better.

'I noticed my posture was vastly improved and this was from having my spine straightened. I was especially happy after a few months because my neck hadn't stiffened up in the usual way, so I knew that the treatment had made some real progress.

'I was convinced that TAMARS was a huge step forward in the treatment of back and neck pain because it can free up the spine better than any person can do with their hands alone and the changes in the alignment of the spine just cannot be achieved with any other treatment. In fact, it is pretty much taken as medical fact that the spine cannot be straightened without some form of surgical intervention and even with this, huge changes cannot be made.

'After this I decided to set up a clinic in Northern Ireland with my father because I knew there would be a huge demand for this treatment. I also didn't want to have to travel to London every time I wanted a treatment!'

I asked Jeff what brought him, and the clinic, to Edinburgh in 2006. He told me: 'I had previously lived in Edinburgh and always wanted to come



Jeff tells me that on average it takes about 5-6 sessions to fully resolve a problem, depending on the problem. And reminders are sent to patients every six months enquiring if they wish to come back for a quick 'free up'. As Jeff explains, 'Treating preventatively like this is much easier than letting a problem get very bad before you see anyone about it.'

It makes one wonder if TAMARS might spell the end to other more common treatments, such as physiotherapy.

'In my opinion TAMARS is a big step forward for the treatment of back and neck pain,' says Jeff. 'The mobilisation part of the treatment is quite similar to what a physiotherapist would try to do with their hands, but the equipment we use makes it much more effective in terms of the pressure we can apply and allows us to work on the whole spine.'

'However, the reflex part of the treatment is something totally new and is the only treatment out there that can effectively straighten a spine, and in many cases it can do this very quickly. Not enough attention is paid to the alignment and the workings of the entire spine but TAMARS addresses this and an improvement in patient recovery can be seen as a result.'

A one hour TAMARS session costs £65; half hourly sessions are available for £40. ❏

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back; opening up another clinic seemed like an ideal way to do this.'

So who would benefit most from this treatment - does it suit people of all ages and fitness?

Jeff explains: 'The treatment is suitable for almost everyone. We have treated patients from nine-years-old to ninety with good results. We actually treat a reasonable number of patients that have had no success with surgery for their back pain and in most cases we can get a good improvement.'

'The main thing to keep in mind about back pain is that it isn't selective to a certain type of age, gender, activity, sport, etc. Anyone can be affected by back pain at some point in their life and obviously the sooner we can treat it the easier it is to resolve the problem.'