



Product Evaluation  
Collar and CTO Braces

# Product Evaluation Introduction

The Product Evaluation Group is a national team of Steeper employed orthotists that meet every 6-8 weeks to discuss a range of specified orthotic products.

The aim of the evaluation is to inform and educate whilst assisting the reader in the comparison of products, highlighting the features, benefits and disadvantages of each product. The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of a small number of experienced practitioners and may not represent the views of Steeper, therefore this report is for internal guidance only.

In order to ascertain the products to be evaluated within each category, the order history for the category was analysed. The most popular products and the newest products on the market were selected to be analysed.

The evaluation process consists of

- Direct Evaluation
- Expert Opinion
- Online Survey
- Clinical Evidence
- Patient Perspective (taken from patient feedback received from the group of orthotists).

## Collar and CTO Brace Document Guide

Document Code - SPEG0007V1

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# Executive Summary

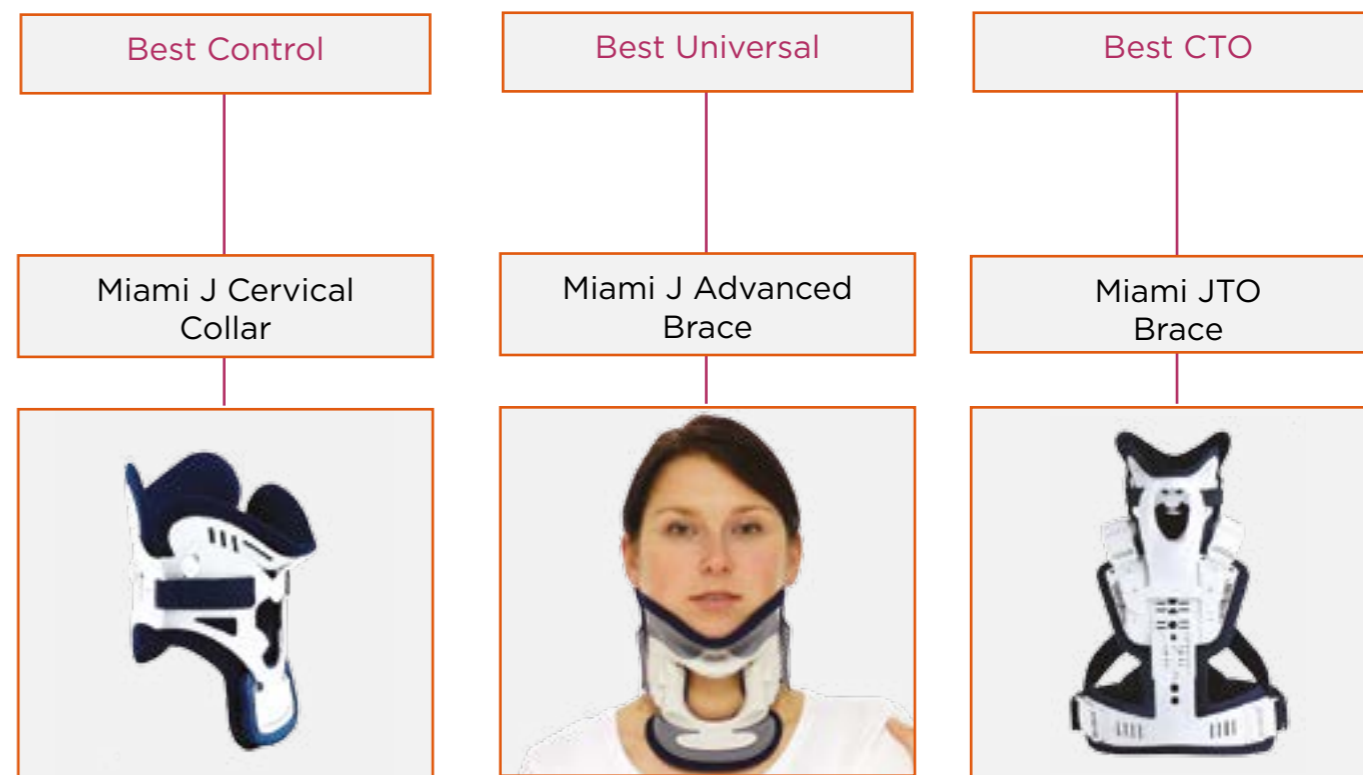
The braces selected in this report were highlighted from the Steeper Group ordering history. The braces selected are the most popular and commonly used by our clinicians.

There is a wide variety of research into the application of the collars and CTOs as is explained further in the clinical research section of this report and the BPG Spinal manual (for more information on these documents, or to request a copy of the spinal manual, please contact [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com)). However one important factor to consider is that due to variations in donning techniques and patient anatomy, it can be very difficult to determine exactly how a certain orthosis will control the cervical spine in each particular instance.

The CTO brace recommended by PEG is the Miami JTO brace and this was primarily due to the unique clip buckle fastening. This feature allows for consistent application for all professionals, helping to improve compliance and comfort for the patient.

The collars recommended by PEG are the Miami J Advanced and the Miami J Cervical collar. The Miami J Advanced covers 80% of the population and allows for adjustment of chin depth, which is especially useful if removal is needed to accommodate a tracheotomy. In contrast the Miami J Cervical collar has a variety of sizes for different neck types so can be good for extremes of shape.

Throughout the course of the document you will see the PEG PICKS icon. This is to highlight the top rated product as recommended by the Product Evaluation Group.



## Clinical Research

There is a wide variety of studies with reference to collars and CTO's, there is also further guidance within the BPG Spinal Manual. For a copy of this please contact, marketingteam@steepergroup.com and we will be happy to send you further information.

At this time the current literature is lacking in high level evidence for the optimum treatment of odontoid peg fractures. Although the general consensus is that fractures with neurological involvement will need surgery to relieve the pressure on the spinal cord and reduce the chance of further complications.

In the evidence all 3 types of fracture have been reviewed using surgery, Halo thoracic bracing and rigid collars.

Type 1 fractures are extremely rare but the evidence found that treating a stable type 1 fracture has a 100% union rate when a rigid collar is worn for 3 months (Howard, 1998, Jaiswal et al., 2005, Kalantar 2013). However the sample size was very small due to the rarity of the fracture, that no conclusions could be drawn from the evidence.

Type 3 fractures are similar with a good rate of 84% of fracture union when conservative treatment alone is used (Julien et al, 2000), assuming the fracture is stable and the Transverse ligament is intact.

Type 2 fractures are the most common and unstable and have the lowest rate of union. There is no general consensus on what is the best treatment method. Several things effect the rate of union including age, which would indicate a surgical halo would be more appropriate. However further risks due to age also effect the success of a surgical Halo such as infection and osteoporotic bones.

The optimum immobilisation for C1 C2 vertebrae is unclear, a Halo thoracic brace reduces axial rotation the most (Johnson et al 1997) but Koller et al (2002) stated flexion extension at atlantoaxial joint is equally restricted in a rigid collar as a Halo Thoracic vest. This is down to the snaking phenomenon that can occur in a Halo Thoracic brace (Benzel et al. 1989), which is caused by a lack of circumferential control of the neck.

Overall the evidence for conservatively bracing odontoid peg fractures is not conclusive and more research is needed. However you may be asked to measure and supply braces for patients with these fracture patterns. It is important especially with type 2 that the consultant is involved with the discussion and informed that this is biomechanically not the best solution, but should only be used as a last resort when surgery/Halo thoracic vest is not possible. This should be clearly documented in SOAP notes.

## Key Observations and Recommendations

For optimum fit of a collar PEG recommends using the Miami collar, due to the unique sizing guide and high occipital support compared to its competitors. Overall, this has been deemed the most supportive and comfortable brace.

Due to the large variety of shapes and sizes collars are required to fit and ultimately control we ruled out the Aspen Vista due to issues whilst using it at the tallest and shortest settings. Whilst the Össur Miami Advanced has a good level of adjustment, it still requires an additional two collars at either end of the spectrum to assist in extremes of shapes, Össur believe the advanced collar will cover 80% of the population with another two collars required for the remaining 20%. The Miami JTO is the natural choice for the CTO section to complement these braces as it clips relatively easily to the collar section, we did raise query to the claim that when adding the JTO section to a collar the level of control raises from C2 to C1 however.

### Summary Table - CTO

Product	PEG Picks	Price	Best Features	Orthotist Rating
Original Aspen CTO	No	£178.61	Excellent cervical control	Above Average
Aspen 2 Post	No	£153.53	Tool free application	Below Average
Aspen 4	No	£214.85	Tool free application	Below Average
Miami JTO	Yes	£150.90	Clip buckle fastening	Above Average
Lerman Minerva	No	£309.00	Space around the neck	Below Average
S.O.M.I	No	£159.50	Excellent stabilisation	Below Average

### Summary Table - Collar

Product	PEG Picks	Price	Best Features	Orthotist Rating
Miami J Cervical	Yes	£32.50	Range of sizes	Average
Miami J Advanced	Yes	£38.00	Adjustment for chin depth	Average
Philadelphia	No	£15.00	Lightweight material	Below Average
Aspen Cervical Collar	No	£33.70	Improved control	Average
Aspen Vista	No	£41.00	Dial adjustment mechanism	Above Average

## Product Evaluation Contents

### Collars and CTO Braces

Product	Page
Miami JTO	8
Original Aspen CTO	9
Aspen 2 and 4 Post	10
Lerman Minerva	11
S.O.M.I	12
Miami J Advanced	14
Miami J Cervical Collar	15
Philadelphia	16
Aspen Cervical Collar	17
Aspen Vista	18



\*For Internal purpose only, for further details about the Product Evaluation Group please contact Marketing. All information was correct at time of print, for current pricing and recommendations please contact Customer Services.

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# CTO Brace Miami JTO

PEG PICKS  
-  
Top Rated  
Product

<b>Supplier</b>	Össur
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower C-spine disruptions</li> <li>• Compression fracture</li> <li>• Lateral mass fracture</li> <li>• Spinous process fracture</li> <li>• Upper C-spine disruptions</li> <li>• For increased stability over the collar alone</li> <li>• Stable Jefferson or Hangman's Fracture</li> <li>• Type I Odontoid Fracture</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Opinion</b>	This brace has a tool free application and is fairly cosmetic, allowing for good compliance.



# CTO Brace Original Aspen CTO

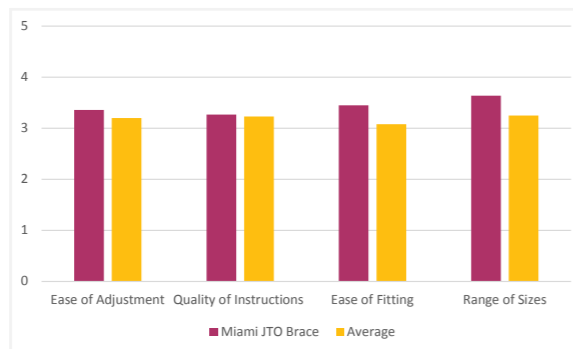
<b>Supplier</b>	Beagle
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post trauma</li> <li>• Stable cervical fractures</li> <li>• Cervical spondylitis</li> <li>• R/A &amp; O/A cervical spine</li> <li>• Herniated cervical disc</li> <li>• Post-operative</li> <li>• Motor Neurone Disease</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Opinion</b>	This brace is flexible, with excellent cervical control. However, no tools are supplied with this brace and are needed for fitting and adjustment.



## Evaluation

<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extends the control to a larger spinal segment.</li> <li>• Patented design with 'floating back' permits maximum immobilisation without the risk of compensatory motion.</li> <li>• MRI, CT and X-ray lucent.</li> <li>• Easy to attach and remove without tools.</li> <li>• Sorbatex padding is antibacterial and clinically proven to inhibit microbial growth, which enhances comfort and helps ensure patient compliance.</li> </ul>
<b>Cost</b>	£150.90
<b>Evidence</b>	There is no evidence to support this brace.
<b>PEG Observations</b>	This brace comes with different collar size options however the advanced collar should fit the majority of patients. The brace feels comfortable, possibly due to the flexible nature of the device, however this does reduce control slightly. It's recommended that you order this brace assembled to save time in clinic but final fitting of the brace needs riveting in place (supplied and tool free), once these are in situ they are difficult to remove and adjust the brace. The clip buckle fastening means consistent application is possible for all professionals.
<b>Expert User Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Miami JTO section is easy to use.</li> <li>• Easy to keep in stock with the collar.</li> </ul>

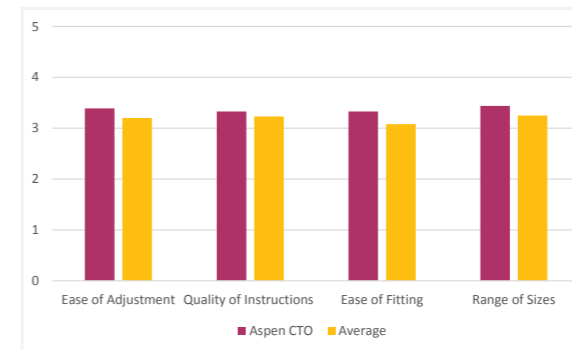
**Orthotist Perspective** Number of orthotist that have used this 11/30.



## Evaluation

<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly effective immobilisation of the cervical and upper thoracic spine.</li> <li>• Research has shown increasing immobilisation, going from a stand alone cervical collar to a two-post device and then onto a four-post orthosis.</li> <li>• Offers 'step-down' alteration for ongoing rehabilitation therapy.</li> <li>• Improves comfort and patient compliance.</li> <li>• MRI compatible.</li> </ul>
<b>Cost</b>	£178.61
<b>Evidence</b>	Schneider, A. Hipp, J, Nguyen, L, Reitman, C (2007)
<b>PEG Observations</b>	The plastic sections of the brace is flexible but does require padding, this is supplied for patients with increased circumference and replacement padding sets are available. Cervical control level is excellent possibly due to the shoulder straps promoting the feeling of support, there is also a step down to a 2 post and then to collar. No tools are supplied with this brace and a Philips screw driver and scissors are required for adjustment and fitting. There are also two paediatric sizes available.
<b>Expert User Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aspen Vista, CTO section is very easy to use and conforms well to various shapes, but the collar needs to go shallower.</li> <li>• A nicely adjustable patient friendly brace.</li> <li>• Can be awkward to fit, especially when log rolling as the brace does not generally fit a wide range of patients.</li> <li>• The front section is often too long and digs into the groin.</li> </ul>

**Orthotist Perspective** Number of orthotist that have used this 17/30.



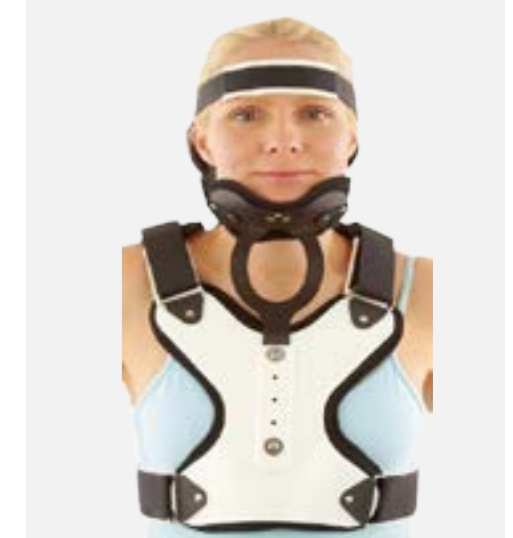
# CTO Brace Aspen 2 and 4 Post

<b>Supplier</b>	Beagle
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower cervical / upper thoracic injuries C1 - T2</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Opinion</b>	This brace has a tool free application and is a slightly more cosmetic updated version of the original CTO. It was also Winner of Best Cervical Care Product at the Spine Technology Awards in 2010



# CTO Brace Lerman Minerva

<b>Supplier</b>	Trulife
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stabilisation (C3-T2)</li> <li>Stable fractures</li> <li>Post-trauma, muscle and ligament</li> <li>Nerve impingement</li> <li>Post-Surgery</li> <li>Rheumatoid Arthritis RA and Spondylitis</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Opinion</b>	Ideal for patients when a tracheotomy is necessary, however this brace is more difficult to fit and comes with less padding over others reviewed.



## Evaluation

<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilises Vista Multipost Collar for patient comfort and motion restriction.</li> <li>One size fits all with several easy adjustment features.</li> <li>Easy application, no tools are required when applying.</li> <li>Adjust the torso height dial to accommodate anatomical changes ensuring the patients will be comfortable and supported while laying, sitting or standing and also providing a custom length to each patient's torso.</li> <li>Multiple adjustment points, provides a customised chest angle for each patient.</li> <li>100% latex free breathable cotton pads complete the system by allowing air to circulate and also wicking moisture away from the skin.</li> <li>MRI Compatible.</li> </ul>
<b>Cost</b>	2 Post - £153.53 4 Post - £214.85
<b>Evidence</b>	Gavin et al (2003), Ivancic, P (2013),
<b>PEG Observations</b>	<p>There are lots of adjustment in all areas with supporting instructions in both the 2 and 4 post devices. This is useful for fitting, however patients may be tempted to adjust the brace themselves. Comfort is excellent however control feels slightly less than the original CTO.</p> <p>The 2 post is the easiest of the 3 Aspen CTO's to fit and adjust with no posterior struts present. The 2 post level of control does feel very similar to the 4 post however the 2 post will allow more comfort generally but particularly when lying down. Optimum posterior collar fit is easier to achieve using the 2 post due to the accessibility of the adjustment at rear.</p>
<b>Expert User Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 4 post would be my go to brace for control.</li> <li>Universal and easy to adjust. No tools needed or fiddly screws.</li> <li>Good brace but a bit fiddly to adjust, comfortable for the patients</li> <li>Find better than Vista, especially when occipital control is needed.</li> </ul>

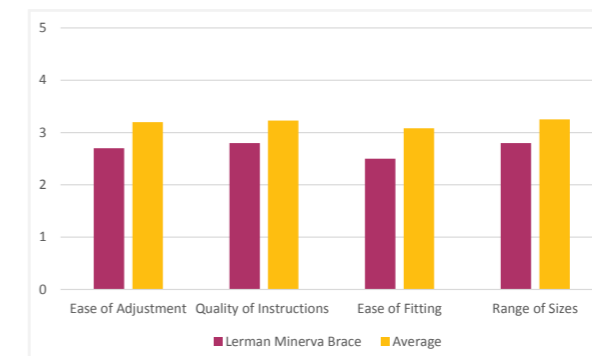
**Orthotist Perspective** Number of orthotist that have used this 11/30.



## Evaluation

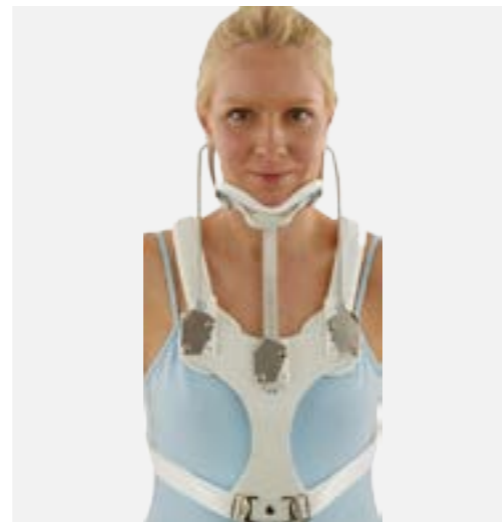
<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controls flexion, extension, lateral and rotary movements of the cervical spine.</li> <li>Two shells anterior and posterior, which are joined by torso and shoulder straps.</li> <li>Posterior section has movable shaped occipital support.</li> <li>Sliding mandibular support is attached to the chest plate with trachea opening.</li> <li>Forehead strap for additional support and stabilisation and silicone chin pad for greater comfort.</li> <li>MRI safe.</li> </ul>
<b>Cost</b>	£309.00
<b>Evidence</b>	Bensel, E, Hadded, T, Saulsbery, C, Kerk, J, Ellinger, J, Weininger, W (1989). Ritcher, D, Latta, L, Milne, E et al (2001)
<b>PEG Observations</b>	<p>The brace does have good space round the neck at the front of the brace if additional space is required for a tracheotomy. It is also supplied with a forehead strap which does improve control, however this may become uncomfortable with prolonged use. The metal struts may need shaping to gain the optimum fit of the brace and the padding is not as generous as its competitors, however 2 sets of pads come as standard with this brace. The return loop hook and loop fastening straps could mean that a consistent fit is not maintained if re-applied by other professionals. The brace requires a Phillips screwdriver to fit and the fitting process may be a little longer due to adjusting in this way.</p>
<b>Expert User Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not used regularly as I found that whilst I found it easy to fit as the orthotist, it was not so easy to fit by patient.</li> </ul>

**Orthotist Perspective** Number of orthotist that have used this 10/30.



# CTO Brace S.O.M.I

<b>Supplier</b>	Trulife
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C4/5 - T3/4 stable fractures</li> <li>Immobilisation following trauma</li> <li>Post operative fixation</li> <li>Weak Rheumatoid Arthritis RA spine</li> <li>May help prevent further deformity in progressive illness</li> <li>Lightweight therefore suitable for the elderly</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Opinion</b>	A slightly more complicated brace to fit, however good support and the low weight gives excellent stabilisation.



## Evaluation

<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternal Occipital Mandibular Immobiliser, controls flexion, extension, lateral and rotational movements C2 - C5.</li> <li>4 piece construction: "Y" shaped chest plate, chin piece, occipital support and headband.</li> <li>Padded aluminium and stainless steel components.</li> <li>Easily shaped and fitted to patient's form with a wide range of possible adjustments.</li> <li>May be fitted onto the patient when they are lying flat.</li> <li>Chin support can be removed for eating (while wearing stabilising headband).</li> </ul>
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<b>Cost</b>	£159.50
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<b>Evidence</b>	Bell, K et al (2009)
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<b>PEG Observations</b>	A conventional looking brace that takes experience and time to fit. However good support and the low weight gives excellent stabilisation. Long instructions could be interpreted differently so experience is required when using this brace. The perceived level of support by the patient is high as this brace is open at the back.
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<b>Expert User Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This brace does not control rotation well and has poor control over lateral flexion.</li> <li>If you are fitting regularly then they are ok, but hard to do solo, especially if you are out of practice. You need bending irons to get a good fit - kit which needs to be on site/carried to ward.</li> <li>The instructions are difficult to understand, and it can be time consuming to fit with straps passing around the back to stabilise the brace before moving the patient.</li> </ul>
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<b>Orthotist Perspective</b>	Number of Orthotist that have used this 23/30.
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## Product Evaluation Collar Braces

# Collar Brace Miami J Advanced



**Supplier** Össur

- Application**
- Post trauma
  - Stable cervical fractures
  - Cervical spondylitis
  - Cervical spondylosis
  - RA and OA cervical spine
  - Herniated cervical disc
  - Post operative

**Expert Opinion** This brace fits a wide variety of patients and the adjustment for chin depth is simple and can be removed to fit around a tracheotomy if needed, something which is unique to this brace.



# Collar Brace Miami J Cervical Collar



**Supplier** Össur

- Application**
- Post trauma
  - Stable cervical fractures
  - Cervical spondylitis
  - Herniated cervical disc
  - RA and OA cervical spine
  - Cervical spondylosis
  - Post operative

**Expert Opinion** There are lots of sizes for different neck types so can be good for extremes of shape.



## Evaluation

- Features**
- Unique sizing mechanism allows for easy modification to suit individual patients, simultaneously achieving an accurate fit and reduced stock levels.
  - Bioengineered to minimise pressure points in key known areas: chin, occiput, trapezius and clavicle.
  - Sternal pad disperses ambulatory pressure and is fully removable, enabling the front of the collar to be taken off when cleaning intubated patients, without the need to remove the tube .
  - Patented Flex Edge® technology
  - MRI, CT and X-ray lucent.

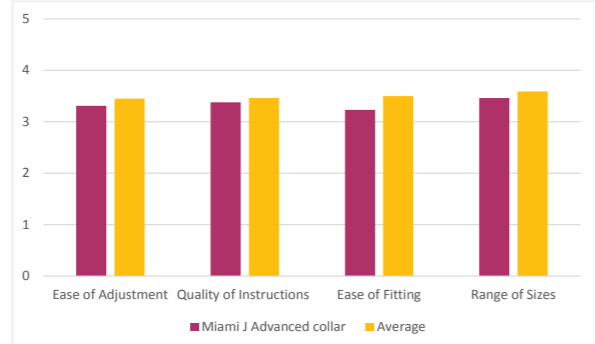
**Cost** £38

**Evidence** There is no evidence to support this brace.

**PEG Observations** This brace covers 85% of the population so covers the vast majority of patients. There are 2 additional collars that cover the remaining 15% of patients. Excellent level of comfort and control can be achieved with this brace. It cups around the occiput well and gives a secure feeling all round. The adjustment for chin depth is simple and can be removed to fit around a tracheotomy if needed, which is a unique feature. This brace also comes with a spare set of pads. Excellent patient care handbook.

- Expert User Comments**
- This brace is comfortable and supportive.
  - It is very durable but not as lightweight as others.
  - More adjustment available than the standard Miami.
  - The adjustment allows for better control at the front and back and contours better than the Vista.
  - Dual material means grey areas can be trimmed and customised if needed.

**Orthotist Perspective** Number of Orthotist that have used this 13/30.



## Evaluation

- Features**
- Sorbatex™ padding is antibacterial and clinically proven to inhibit microbial growth, which enhances comfort and helps assure patient compliance.
  - MRI, CT and X-ray lucent.
  - Bioengineered to minimise pressure points in key known areas: chin, occiput, trapezius and clavicle.
  - Comfort adjustment buttons for occiput and sternal pad removable when supine, lying and swallowing.

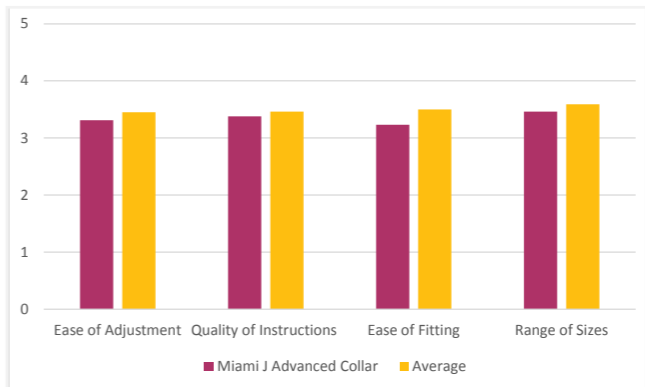
**Cost** £32.50

**Evidence** Gavin et al (2003). Aspen Medical Products (2004). Bell, K et al (2009), Tescher A et al (2007), Askins, V, Eismont, F (1997) Ritcher, D, Latta, L, Milne, E et al (2001)

**PEG Observations** This brace comes in 6 different Phenotypes with a user-friendly guide to brace selection. For patients with a slight Kyphosis this guide is useful. The padding is of good quality and spare pads come as standard. This is a comfortable brace with a good level of control as the collar comes high up the back. The brace is similar in presentation to the Advanced and is cosmetic in appearance in relation to its rivals.

- Expert User Comments**
- For small clinics there are too many sizes to keep in stock.
  - Good collar and the Phenotypes allow for a good range of sizing.
  - Occitan back option is good for bedrest/at risk skin/etc. better vented than the Philadelphia but not as good as the Aspen Vista.
  - Lots of sizes for different neck types so can be good for extremes of shape.
  - Gives good control and padded well.

**Orthotist Perspective** Number of Orthotist that have used this 24/30.





# Collar Brace Philadelphia

<b>Supplier</b>	Steeper
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spondylitis</li> <li>Spondylosis</li> <li>Rheumatoid arthritis</li> <li>Osteoarthritis</li> <li>Post-op control of extension/flexion</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Opinion</b>	This brace is a lightweight material and is surprisingly comfortable for the patient to wear. However, less often used, due to the variety of other collars available.



# Collar Brace Aspen Cervical Collar

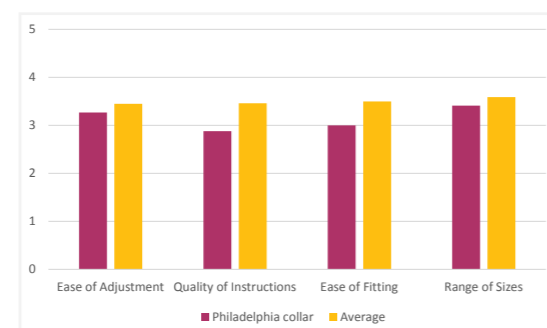
<b>Supplier</b>	Beagle
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-trauma</li> <li>Stable cervical fractures</li> <li>Cervical spondylitis</li> <li>Cervical Spondylosis</li> <li>R/A &amp; O/A cervical spine</li> <li>Herniated cervical disc</li> <li>Post-operative</li> <li>Motor Neurone Disease</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Opinion</b>	Due to not being a universal brace the specific sizing, control and comfort feels improved.



## Evaluation

<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two piece moulded collar provides adjustable comfortable support.</li> <li>Made from non-toxic hypoallergenic plastazote.</li> <li>Touch and close fastening.</li> </ul>
<b>Cost</b>	£15
<b>Evidence</b>	Koller, H et al (2002), Polin R et al (1996), Hughes, S (1998) Chin, K, Auberach, J, Adam, S, Sodl, J, Riew, K (2006) Schneider A, Hipp, J, Nguyen, L Reitman C (2007).
<b>PEG Observations</b>	This is quite a full brace which may be warm for the patient however a cotton liner can be ordered, but does not come supplied with the collar. The non porous material means the brace can be wiped clean with ease. The internal chin shelf reduces the chance of the chin slipping into the brace.
<b>Expert User Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be quite hot and uncomfortable for the patient to wear.</li> <li>Unpleasant collar; old fashioned looking, can be quite sweaty for patients, poor adjustment, though if patient is exactly the right shape for it the collar can fit and control well.</li> <li>Collar can be easily modified by clinician as it is made from plasterzote.</li> <li>It's a very adjustable product that serves a good clinical need. Difficulty with use in the elderly as I have seen these them cause pressure sores, due to the rigidity.</li> <li>Tend to use rarely now with many other types of collars available now.</li> </ul>

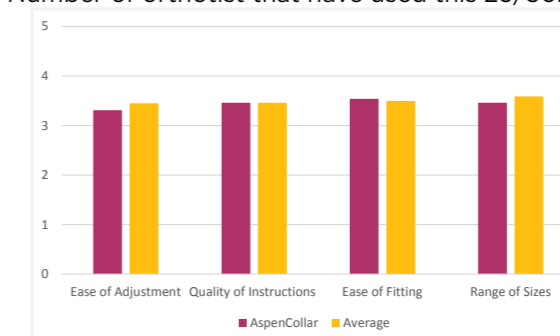
**Orthotist Perspective** Number of orthotist that have used this 27/30.



## Evaluation

<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combination of low density / high density polyethylene outer shell effectively limits flexion, extension, rotation and lateral motions.</li> <li>Self-adjusting chin piece and adjustable support tabs distribute pressure to the mandibles and upper chest by conforming to each patients physiology.</li> <li>Tightening the patented Occipital Support Strap™ creates an adjustable shelf that conforms to and supports the patients occiput providing a customised fit.</li> <li>Interchangeable front and back panels.</li> <li>X-Ray and MRI compatible.</li> </ul>
<b>Cost</b>	£33.70
<b>Evidence</b>	Schneider A, Hipp, J, Nguyen, L Reitman C (2007), Tescher A et al (2007), Askins, V, Eismont, F (1997) Powers, J (1997) Hughes, S (1998) Aspen Medical Products (2004).
<b>PEG Observations</b>	Correct size of brace must be ordered as this is not a universal brace, there are 4 sizes available. Because of the specific sizing and control, the comfort feels improved in comparison to the universal. Spare pads are also available to order but not supplied.
<b>Expert User Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A nice all round easy to fit product.</li> <li>Can keep most used sizes in stock.</li> <li>Better than the Philadelphia in terms of lighter weight in look, more ventilation, but still minimal adjustment.</li> <li>Use frequently and find that altering plastic segs and shaping can help fit along with the use of differential front and back sizes. The aspen 4 post collar gives extra control than the standard vista type.</li> <li>Easy to trim and extra pads available for washing. Quite often fitted too loose and patients chin ends up inside the collar.</li> </ul>

**Orthotist Perspective** Number of orthotist that have used this 29/30.





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