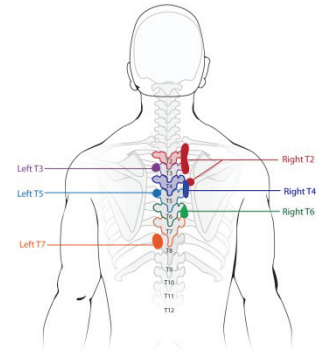


Costovertebral Joint Pain Pattern

- Costovertebral joints are the joints where the ribs attach to the spine.
- Young et al established pain patterns for the costovertebral joints.¹
- Costovertebral joints
 - Cause parasagittal thoracic pain.
 - Do not/rarely cause midline thoracic pain or arm pain.
 - Do not cause pain that crosses to the other side. The right costovertebral joints do not cause left side thoracic pain and vice versa.
 - Can be unilateral pain (from joints on one side of the spine) or bilateral (pain from both sides of the spine).
- When pain is chronic or severe, the pain can extend beyond these pain patterns.
- Costovertebral joints do not have to show degeneration on diagnostic imaging to be painful. This is usually due to a joint sprain (synovitis).
- Costovertebral joints that do show degeneration on diagnostic imaging can be either a joint sprain (synovitis) or degeneration (arthrosis) or both.
- Consider that the patient may have more than one pain generator.



1. Young BA, Gill HE, Wainner RE, Flynn TW. Thoracic Costovertebral Joint. Pain Patterns: a study in normal volunteers. BMC. Musculoskeletal Disorders 2008, 9:140.
2. Sizer PS, Phelps V, and Azevedo E. Disc Related and Non-Disc Related Disorders of the Thoracic Spine. *Pain Practice*, Volume 1, Number 2, 2001 136–149.