

Traction

Traction is a treatment modality used in the treatment of lower back and neck pain to help alleviate the symptoms of pain and to increase the mobility of the spine. Theoretically, traction is applied to help separate the joints and discs in the lower back and neck, which helps to decrease the pressure on the nerves in the spine.

For lumbar traction, the patient must be strapped into a mechanical machine. One device wraps around the pelvis area, while the vest supports the rib area. These two devices are stabilized with straps and a machine applies the mechanical force needed.

For cervical traction, the treatment can be applied to the patient in a sitting or lying position. If using the sitting position, the head of the patient is placed in a harness. This harness is attached to a pulley system and a small weight, where the weight provides the traction force while the patient sits comfortably in a chair. When in a lying or supine position, a specific device is required to perform the traction. The patient is asked to lie on their back and strap their forehead into the device. A pneumatic pump is used to help provide the traction force to the neck area.