



Cervical traction is used to alleviate neck pain, as well as shoulder and upper arm pain associated with cervical spine disorders. It can also relieve muscle spasms and nerve compression, and it can aid in achieving proper alignment of the cervical vertebrae.

There are two commonly used methods of applying cervical traction.

1. Supine cervical traction (in bed)
2. Overdoor cervical traction (vertical-sitting up)

Your doctor has prescribed \_\_\_\_\_ cervical traction with \_\_\_\_\_ pounds of weight for you to use at home.

To apply either of these types of cervical traction, you will wear a head halter that applies the pull to the base of the skull in the rear and under the chin. The proper choice of head halters and its correct adjustment is extremely important to obtain the maximum benefit from the traction. When properly adjusted, the head halter should always deliver more pull to the base of the skull in the rear than under the chin. This provides some slight flexion along with the extension of the neck (tending to tilt the chin slightly toward the chest), resulting in more effective separation of the cervical vertebrae.

To apply the head halter:

1. Hold the head halter by the two metal "D" rings, allowing the head halter to hang down.
2. Place your head up between the two straps from the bottom, positioning the chin in the chin cup and the rear strap at the base of the skull (away from the earlobes).
3. Fasten the connecting straps on the sides and adjust for proper fit as instructed by our representative.

## Supine cervical traction (in bed)



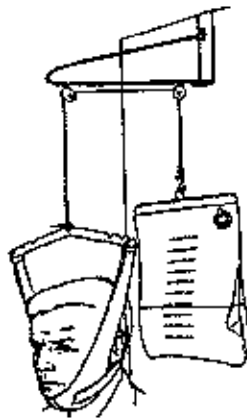
Our representative will set up the equipment with the prescribed weight and demonstrate it for you. **Do not change the amount of weight without consulting your doctor.** Apply the head halter as described above and adjust as instructed by our representative. Attach the "D" rings on the two head halter straps to each end of the spreader bar. The traction rope from the center of the spreader bar to the first pulley should be pulling upward at an angle of approximately 30 degrees to your neck and upper body. Because of the slight curve in the cervical spine, this angle of pull provides better separation of the small vertebrae in that area. This separation of the vertebrae more effectively reduces compression and pinching of the nerves in the neck.

**Note:** If you are in a hospital bed, any change in the elevation of the head of the bed may change the angle of pull and may require adjustment of the traction equipment to maintain the correct angle.

Do not get in and out of traction to answer the phone, go to the door, etc. To benefit from the traction, the pulling force must be applied without interruption until the muscles in the affected area relax and begin to stretch. This stretching allows desired separation of the vertebrae and relief for compressed or pinched nerves. Interruption of the pull prior to muscles relaxing and stretching may result in painful muscle spasms.

If you develop jaw pain from the pull of the traction, or if you have any questions concerning use of the traction, please call our office.

## Overdoor cervical traction (vertical-sitting up)



Overdoor cervical traction provides an easy method of applying cervical traction intermittently for periods of 30 minutes to an hour at a time. This type of traction lends itself particularly to the active ambulatory individual. The Overdoor Traction Kit usually includes everything needed for the installation: overdoor bracket with pulleys, traction rope, spreader bar, head halter designed especially for vertical traction, and a weight bag.

To install and use this kit you should:

1. Position the overdoor bracket on the top of the door.
2. Fill the weight bag to the prescribed weight. **Do not change the amount of weight without consulting your doctor.**
3. Thread the rope through the pulleys. Tie the end nearest the door to the weight bag and the other end to the center of the spreader bar.
4. Apply the head halter as previously described and adjust as instructed by our representative.
5. Sit in a straight chair directly below the front pulley, place the "D" rings from the head halter into the slots or hooks on the ends of the spreader bar. Confirm that the head halter is adjusted to provide the proper pull (more pressure to the back of the head than under the chin).
6. Relax. Stay in the traction for the period prescribed by your doctor.

**Note:** Do not get in and out of traction to answer the phone, go to the door, etc. To benefit from the traction, the pulling force must be applied without interruption until the muscles in the affected area relax and begin to stretch. This stretching allows desired separation of the vertebrae and relief for compressed or pinched nerves. Interruption of the pull prior to muscles relaxing and stretching may result in painful muscle spasms.

If you develop jaw pain from the pull of the traction, or if you have any questions concerning the use of the traction, please call our office.