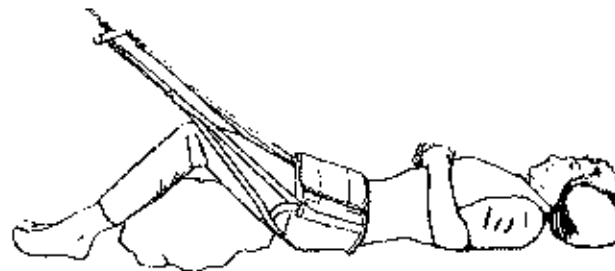




## PELVIC TRACTION

Pelvic traction is used to alleviate low back pain, as well as hip and leg pain associated with some lower back disorders. It can also reduce muscle spasms and aid in achieving proper alignment of the lower vertebrae. Your doctor has prescribed pelvic traction for you to use at home.

To apply this traction, you will wear a pelvic belt that fits snugly around your hips with long straps on both sides that attach to a spreader bar and a rope and pulley system with weights. The amount of weight used and the frequency of use has been determined by your physician. You should not deviate from this prescribed treatment without his/her authorization. Our representative will set-up and demonstrate the equipment for you and show you how to apply the pelvic traction belt. Because of the weight required for this type of traction, it is usually necessary to off-set the pull of the weights to prevent you from being slowly pulled down in the bed. This can best be achieved with the use of a hospital bed, by simply elevating both the knees and the head of the bed to place you in the Fowler Position. If your pelvic traction must be applied in a home bed, your hips and knees should be flexed by placing a pillow or blanket-roll under the knees. The foot of the home bed may also have to be elevated slightly, using wooden blocks or bricks, to prevent you from sliding down in the bed.



The angle of pull for pelvic traction ranges from a minimum of 30 degrees to as much as 45 degrees above the horizontal. See the accompanying drawing. This angle of pull provides for better separation of the vertebrae which more effectively relieves compression and pinching of the nerves. The proper flexing of the hips also contributes greatly to getting the pull to the proper place and achieving better separation of these discs.

Some common errors in the application and use of pelvic traction are:

- The tendency to wear the pelvic traction belt too high, around the waist instead of much lower around the hips. The pull on the lower spine must actually be applied to the pelvis. The top edge of the pelvic traction belt should be just an inch or two above the trochanter (hip bones). Wearing the belt too high can result in receiving absolutely no benefit from the traction, since the belt may actually then be above rather than below the malpositioned vertebrae. The

traction could then be contributing to more pain and the problem rather than to the relief of pain and the solution.

- Applying the pull horizontally rather than maintaining the proper angle of pull, 30 to 45 degrees above the horizontal.
- Failure to maintain the proper position with the knees and hips adequately flexed.
- Not staying in the traction long enough. Unless your physician instructs you differently, you must remain essentially immobilized for a period of at least several days. Getting in and out of the traction several times a day will probably nullify any positive results and may actually make your condition worse. You should get out of the traction only to go to the bathroom. Even when you achieve relief from the pain, don't stop using the traction until ordered to do so by your doctor. You may find that the discomfort quickly returns.

If you have any questions, please contact our office.