

SELF TRACTION (UNLOADING)

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The purpose of self traction is to ease your pain. Traction is the same as unloading your back. Begin with a gentle pull. Your pain should not get worse during or after traction. If your pain gets worse, stop the exercises and talk to your doctor or physical therapist. Choose only those positions that decrease your pain.

Hold each position for 10 seconds, release and repeat. Continue for 5-10 minutes every hour. *5-10 times, 4-5 x day*

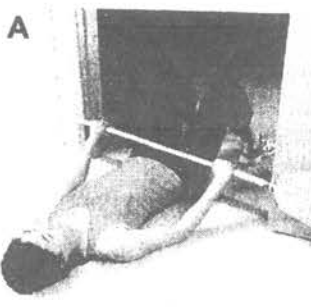
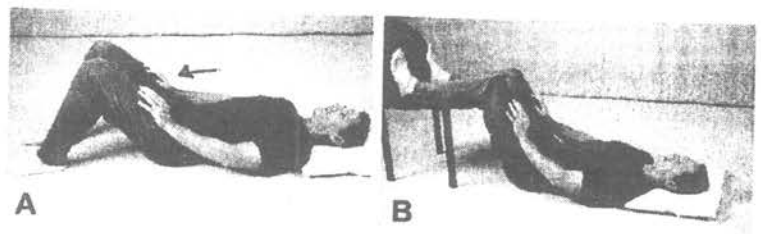


Back-lying Mattress Pull

Lie on your back in bed with your knees bent. Grab the top of the mattress or bed post. Gently pull to provide traction or unloading.

Hook-lying Leg Press

* Lie on your back with your knees bent (figure A) or lie on your back with your lower legs resting on a chair (figure B). Gently push on your thighs.



Doorway Push or Pull

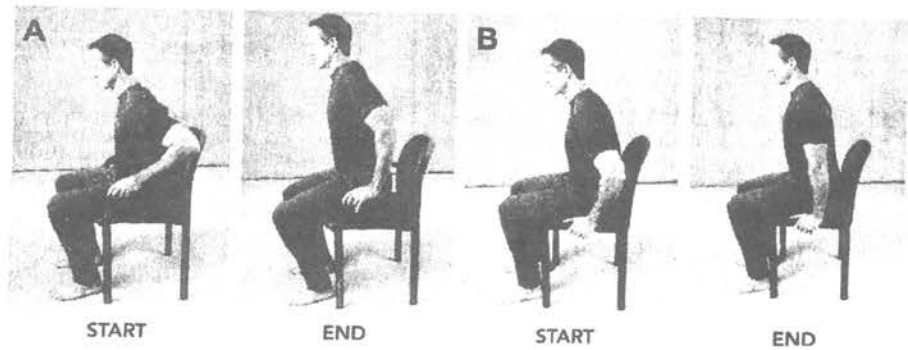
Push (A) Lie on the floor in the doorway with your hips centered in doorway. Place a stick in the doorway below your waist level. Push the stick against doorjamb to unload your back.

Pull (B) Lie on the floor with your head inside the doorway. Place a stick outside the doorjamb. Pull on the stick to unload your back.

Sitting

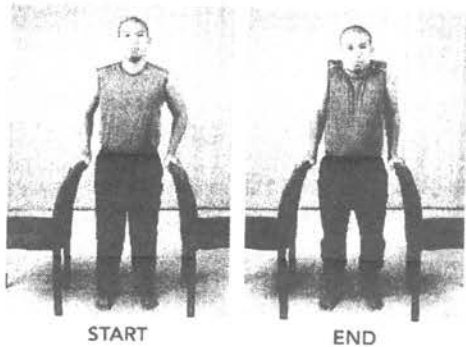
Place your hands on the arm rests of a chair (figure A). Push down on the armrest to unload your back. Do not let your buttocks lift off of the seat. If the chair does not have arm rests, make fists and place them on the seat (figure B). Slowly push down to unload. Do not let your buttocks lift off of the seat.

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Additional Instructions:

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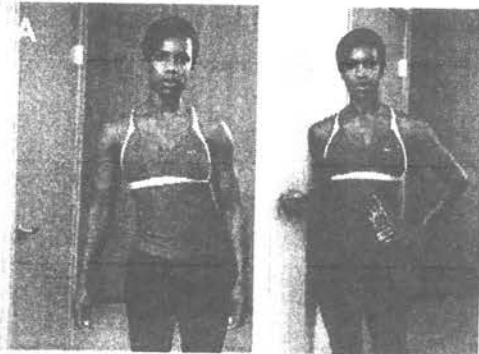
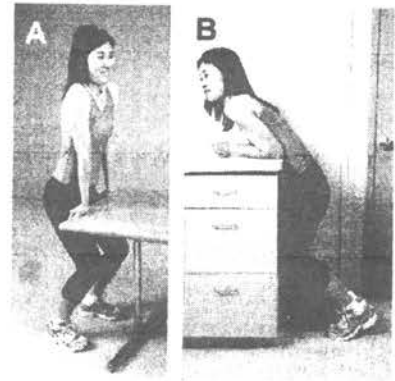
Stand Between 2 Chairs

Stand between two chairs and place your hands on the back of the chairs. Keep your arms straight as you bend your knees to unload your back.

Stand Leaning on a Table (A) or Countertop (B)

Table (A) Stand facing the table. Place your hands on the table and keep your arms straight. Bend your knees a little to unload your back.

Countertop (B) Place your forearms on the counter. You may use a pillow or towel under your elbows for comfort. Lean on the counter with your weight on your forearms. Bend your knees a little to unload your back.

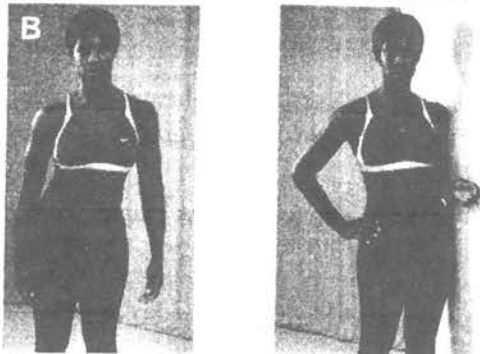


Shift Correction

If your therapist has pointed out that you are “shifted” or “crooked,” your shoulders will appear to be further over to the right (figure A) or to the left (figure B).

To correct the shift:

Right Shift Correction (A) If your shoulders are shifted to your right: stand with your right side against the wall. Lean against the wall and gently let your hips move to the right.



Left Shift Correction (B) If your shoulders are shifted to your left: stand with your left side against the wall. Lean against the wall and gently let your hips move to the left.

You can add the shift correction to any of the standing self traction/unloading positions.

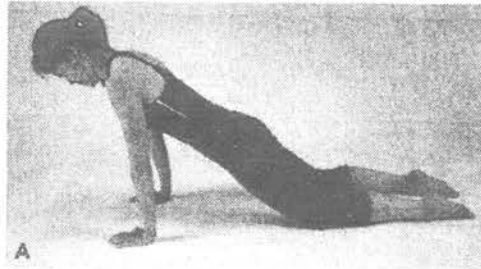
Additional Instructions:

Hamstring Stretch - Both feet on wall

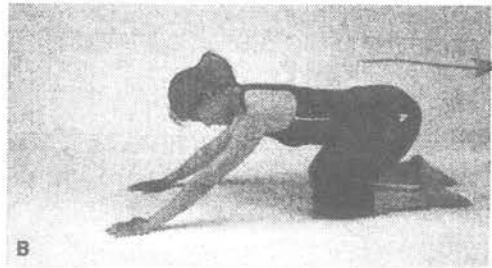
ROCKING FORWARD AND BACKWARD

Start on your hands and knees. Find and hold your *neutral position* throughout the exercise.

A. Rocking forward: Slowly move your body forward over your hands, and then slowly return to the start position.



B. Rocking backward: Slowly move your body backwards over your heels and then slowly return to the start position.



C. Rocking forward and backward: Combine exercise **A** and **B** by moving forward and backward in one smooth movement while maintaining your *neutral position*.

Do: A _____ B _____ C _____

Frequency 2 x 10-15 rep.