

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Spinal Decompression Therapy?

Spinal decompression therapy is a non-surgical, comfortable traction therapy for the relief of back and leg pain or neck and arm pain. During this procedure, by cycling through distraction and relaxation phases and by proper positioning, a spinal disc can be isolated and placed under negative pressure, causing a vacuum effect within it.

What can this vacuum effect do?

The vacuum effect accomplishes two things. From a mechanical standpoint, disc material that has protruded or herniated outside the normal confines of the disc can be pulled back within the disc by the vacuum created within the disc. Also, the vacuum within the disc stimulates blood supply to the injured area, secondarily stimulating a healing response. This results in pain reduction and proper healing.

What machine is used for this purpose?

There are a number of spinal decompression machines presently used in the United States. After significant research, we have chosen to use the Triton DTS machine manufactured by Chattanooga, Inc., the premier manufacturer of physical therapy machines.

Who can benefit from Spinal Decompression Therapy?

Spinal decompression therapy is designed to unload the spinal disc. Any back pain or neck pain caused in whole or in part by a damaged disc may be helped by spinal decompression therapy. These conditions include herniated, protruding or bulging discs, spinal stenosis, sciatica or radiculopathy (pinched nerves).

Are there conditions where Spinal Decompression is not indicated?

Spinal decompression therapy is usually not recommended for pregnant women, or patients who have severe osteoporosis, severe obesity or severe nerve damage. It is not recommended for patients over 70. However, every patient is evaluated on an individual basis. Spinal surgery with instrumentation (screws and metal plates or "cages") is also contraindicated. Surgery to the discs without fusion or fusion using bony replacement is not contraindicated.

How often do I take treatment sessions? How long does each session last?

Spinal decompression is usually performed 3-5 times a week for 15-20 sessions.

What are the results of Spinal Decompression Therapy?

Patients who will do well tend to feel a sense of relief within six sessions. Full relief, if attainable through this passive treatment will usually be in 8-12 sessions. Occasionally a stubborn pain syndrome may continue to improve slowly over 15+ sessions though this is not the norm.

I have had spinal surgery, but continue to have pain. Can I try Spinal Decompression Therapy?

Spinal decompression therapy can help people with back pain after failed spinal surgery. It can be performed in most patients who have not been left with an unstable spine after surgery.

How much does Spinal Decompression Therapy cost? Does insurance cover it?

If you compare Spinal Decompression Therapy to the cost of surgery, it is a very small fraction. Insurance companies do not cover decompression therapy directly- however, the rehabilitation required to stabilize your spine is most often covered. Our clinic offers a money back guarantee of results. If you do not see at least 50% improvement after the recommended treatment plan, you will get a **full refund of your money**.

What is disc decompression and DTS therapy?

First, some facts about spinal discs:

- Research has proven discs may be a primary site of back and leg pain, as well as neck and arm pain
- The disc is damaged by "compression & flexion" ['squishing'].
- The disc is avascular (it has no direct blood supply). It gets its nutrients in and waste products out by diffusion [like a sponge]. The healthier the disc the greater its' diffusion
- Over time loss of strength of the lower abdominal and low back muscles, poor posture, trauma etc. increase the "compression" on the discs, especially of the lower discs [L4/L5] and the mid-neck discs [C5/C6]

How can DTS therapy help?

- DTS therapy stretches the spine in a safe, controlled and very specific way to open the disc spaces. This decreases the pressure on the discs and allows an increase of blood flow to help reduce inflammation and heal the area.
- Research indicates in some cases bulges may be pulled or *drawn in* by DTS decompression and help relieve pinched nerves.
- As with all *therapy* your adherence to the treatment advice and protocols are vital to ensure the best possible outcome. Additionally, though "Decompression" therapy can help many back conditions it is not a 'cure' for everyone. Many times disc damage cannot be fully healed due to the extent of damage or the continuation of irritating activities.
- Since traction works with the body's natural healing process, it does take time to gain full relief. Twelve sessions is the usual minimum number for disc injuries, especially with leg or arm radiation.
- "Decompression" is a safe and comfortable treatment for most. It rarely causes pain or worsens symptoms [if traction is painful it is simply discontinued]. Occasionally spasms can create post treatment discomfort (ice or electric stimulation will usually relieve it).