

# Dr. Colin Gage

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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Spinal Decompression

For more than a year now, I have been utilizing a new "Spinal Decompression" table in my practice that has greatly assisted me in the treatment of neck and back pain. More specifically, it is used primarily for the conservative treatment of conditions that occur in the spine, such as: herniated disks, sciatica, degenerative disk disease, degenerative joint disease, and osteoarthritis. Many practitioners around the world are starting to use this very same form of treatment in their medical, physiotherapy, and chiropractic practices with great results.

Did you know that the discs and joints in your back and neck might constitute the source of up to 70% of neck and arm pain? Fortunately, non-surgical "decompression" or "traction" is quickly becoming a mainstream form of conservative treatment of these problems.

The decompression or traction process allows stretched or torn tissue fibers to heal and tighten. Pressure that builds up on your discs and nerves is relieved by drawing areas of herniated discs apart or back into place. This is accomplished by creating negative pressure, causing a vacuum effect. The vacuum effect accomplishes 2 things:

- 1) The jelly-like fluid found in the center of the disc that has protruded or herniated outside the normal confines of the disc may be "pulled back in".
- 2) The vacuum within the disc stimulates the growth of blood supply. This may result in pain reduction and healing at the injured site.

Patients lie on the padded table, fully clothed, while wearing a comfortable harness used to traction the neck or the low back. The amount of force used during the traction can be as gentle or firm as needed. In fact, most patients find the treatment quite relaxing.

Decompression or traction has a relatively quick initial response. Patients who will have good success with this form of treatment tend to feel a sense of relief within 2-6 sessions. Full relief usually does not exceed 15 sessions. Traction, along with good posture, chiropractic manipulation, and exercise, can be a recipe for effective spinal pain management.

Just so you know that what I am saying is valid and that decompression actually works, I have included a few brief descriptions of the recent research on the topic.

In a recent study of 219 patients with herniated discs and degenerative disc disease, 86 per cent who completed the therapy showed immediate improvement and resolution of their symptoms; 92 per cent improved overall; five patients (two per cent) relapsed within 90 days of initial treatment."

*Glomis T, Grotecke E. Spinal Decompression. Orth Tech Review 5(6):36-39; Nov-Dec 2003.*

"Decompression therapy, addresses both primary and secondary causes of low back and referred leg pain. We thus submit that decompression therapy should be considered first, before the patient undergoes a surgical procedure which permanently alters the anatomy and function of the affected lumbar spine segment."

*Eugene S, Kitchener P, Smart R. A prospective Randomised Controlled Study of VAX-D and TENS for the Treatment of Chronic Low Back Pain. J Neuro Research 23 (7); Oct 2001*

"We consider decompression therapy to be a primary treatment modality for low back pain associated with lumbar disc herniation at single or multiple levels, degenerative disc disease, facet arthropathy, and decreased spine mobility. We believe that post-surgical patients with persistent pain or "failed back syndrome" should not be considered candidates for further surgery until a reasonable trial of decompression has been tried."

*Gose E, Naguszewski W, Naguszewski R. Vertebral Axial Decompression Therapy for pain associated with herniated or degenerated discs or facet syndrome: an outcome study. J Neuro research 20(4): 186-90; Apr 1998*

If you have any further questions on how spinal decompression can help you to recover from neck or back pain, please call me directly at my office at 250-378-5456