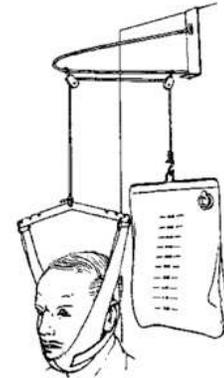


## Pronex Cervical Traction

The Pronex Cervical Traction is one of my favorite traction devices for patients with neck pain, neck tension, cervical disc problems, and particularly if they have some jaw pain of some kind.

The “old school” version which had a strap under the chin and used sand or water was less costly but had its limitations since it caused jaw (TMJ) pain or problems even when the patient had no pain in their jaw beforehand. As you can imagine it was really a problem for patients that already had jaw pain.



While there are many types of cervical traction devices there are some very specific reasons why I like the Pronex type:



1. There are no forces applied to the chin, which can adversely affect the TMJ or jaw.
2. The patient completely controls the level of traction force and can easily increase or decrease the pressure.
3. The traction is used easily on the bed or floor while you can relax and lie down.
4. With many types of cervical conditions something called “forward head posture” can be a problem. The Pronex unit is special in that it can treat forward head posture by helping to reduce the suboccipital muscle tension (just at the back of the head and top of the neck) while also performing decompression of the neck or cervical spine.
5. There are specific types of TMJ or jaw problems that will also have neck pain and tension and this unit is perfect for treating patients with those types of conditions.
6. The traction unit that the patient rests their neck upon is a firm yet soft material which is very comfortable whereas some other types of traction devices use hard plastic type materials.
7. The Pronex cervical traction allows the cervical traction experience to be patient directed and participatory. That means that while there is some traction upon the neck the patient is to attempt to become aware of what part(s) of their neck might be resisting the traction and attempt to relax those muscles.
8. The traction is not forcing the neck into a specific position but instead creates decompression and soothing relaxation.



*How do I use my Pronex Traction Unit?*

## Pronex Neck Traction Directions

I have my own recommendations that I use for my patients which differs from those that come with the Pronex unit. The Pronex traction device will come in a zipper bag for easy storage along with a forehead strap and an angled ramp type device if you want to tilt your neck when using the traction unit. I recommend that the patient just put those aside since I have not yet in 5 years had any need of those additional tools. Don't bother with the head strap since I have found it mostly a nuisance.

You need to be familiar with the traction device. The flat part should be positioned on the shoulders and the curved part is where you rest your head. The "L" or "R" on one side of the unit is not for "left" or "right" but instead refers to the unit being "Large" or "Regular."

It is best to begin using the traction device with all the air out. This can be performed but making sure the valve that allows air into and out of the unit is rotated to the left (not too tightly to the left though). Then when all the air seems to be out of the unit, close the valve by turning it to the right.

It is important to make sure the traction device fits your head, which I will do when I order the unit for you. The Pronex should not be too loose or too tight, but should feel comfortable.



You begin by lying down and placing your head in the headpiece and noting that the squeeze bulb is on the right hand side of the unit. Gently squeeze the bulb a few times until you begin to feel some traction upon your neck. With some patients this will be with the first few pumps or squeezes and with others it may take quite a few before they start feeling some traction. It is always best to do less and be less forceful when starting out.

I recommend that you start by finding a pressure that feels both comfortable and yet creates some traction or decompression. Then focus on relaxing your body as if to surrender to the decompression forces to your head and neck. As you relax you may after a minute or two notice that you aren't feeling any decompression or traction. At that point you can attempt to squeeze the bulb 2-3 times and then attempt to further relax your head and neck again. You can either rest the whole time with one amount of pressure, if you feel it the whole time. Or you can periodically increase the pressure after 1-2 minute relaxation periods. You do not have to release the pressure control valve at any time while you are attempting to create neck traction.

When you are finished turn the pressure valve control to the left and you should hear the air go out. Let the air leave the unit completely, rest for 30 seconds, and then use your hands to lift your head out of the traction device. After you move around and feel comfortable I then recommend that you attempt to get out any residual air out of the unit and then turn the valve control to the right to close. Store in your carrying container and periodically clean off the unit as needed.

To begin 10-15 minutes will be sufficient and you can do it 1-2 times per day. After you get used to it you can go up to 20 minutes 1-2 times per day. Infrequently the back of your head will feel as if it has "gone to sleep" if you have been on the unit for a long time, Do not be alarmed as this will usually go away in a minute or two. However if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, disoriented, or have any concerns cease using this unit and call Dr. Blum.