**A Gentle Way to Work on the Low Back**

We’ve all heard that there is more than one way to skin a cat. Well, there is also more than one way for a chiropractor to adjust a bone in the spine to get someone relief from low back pain, hand numbness or a headache. Chiropractors are taught multiple techniques in school for helping people and then they tend to focus on a few ones that they find most effective and that work best for them. One of the techniques that I was taught, use and find quite effective for issues arising from the lower back is called flexion distraction.

Flexion distraction is a gentle, low force technique originally developed to help those suffering from pains (or numbness) traveling down the legs that originated from the low back, but its effectiveness doesn’t stop there. Flexion distraction is also helpful for treating: low back pain, lumbar disc herniations, spinal stenosis, disc degeneration, pelvic pain, and spinal arthritis.

Flexion distraction works by having a patient lie face down on a special table. There are two cushions to the table, one which supports the body from the waist up on a patient and one that supports the body from the waist down on a patient. The chiropractor, while contacting the troublesome low back with the palm of their hand and gentle pushing it in the direction of the patient’s head also lightly pushes down on the cushion supporting the patient from the waist down which flexes and distracts (stretches) the spine. In addition the lower cushion can swing to either the left or the right to flex and distract the spine in ways that are similar to how the body moves. This technique widens the spinal canal, reduces pressure on spinal nerves, reduces disc pressure and restores normal motion to the spinal joints. As this is a hands-on approach it is specific to each patient from those who may only need work done on the L4-L5 disc to those who need all of the lumbar spinal segments and pelvis adjusted.

The flexion distraction technique is relaxing, relieving and gentle. There are no quick movements or noises and the patient doesn’t need to move much to get in position for this technique to be utilized. The table takes them from standing to a lying down to a position where they can be worked on and then up once their visit is done. This technique is especially good for those who are in severe pain who aren’t capable of moving themselves to assume multiple positions needed for other types of adjustments, as well as the elderly who likewise have some difficulty moving to get into different positions.

I’ve used this technique on children as young as eight and adults as old as eighty-eight. I’ve seen it help people who come in walking hunched over and then afterwards are able to walk upright. It has helped those who just hurt themselves yesterday and those who’ve been in pain for years or decades. If you or someone you know is looking for a gentle way to improve a low back condition that is either short or long term in duration this approach may be right for you.

**Feel Free To Forward This Information To A Friend!**   
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This information is solely advisory, and should not be substituted for medical or chiropractic advice.  Any and all health care concerns, decisions, and actions must be done through the advice and counsel of a health care professional who is familiar with your updated medical history.