

Health NEWS & NOTES

Relief For Chronic Back Pain May Be In A Vest

(NAPSA)—An ingenious new treatment may provide some relief for the 20 million Americans who suffer from back pain every year.

Back pain is the most common cause of disability for Americans under 45 and until recently it was a difficult problem to treat.

Because the cause of lower back pain is poorly understood, only 10 to 20 percent of those people who seek treatment get a definitive diagnosis. Treatments for low back pain can include pain medication, chiropractic visits, massage or acupuncture, but some back pain does not improve with these treatments.

Of the five million Americans who suffer chronic back pain, about one million may require surgery, but even surgery does not always provide a solution.

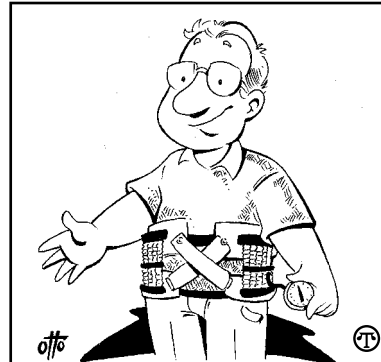
That's what happened with Dan Fairbairn of Denver, Colorado, whose chronic back pain led to ruptured discs and discectomy surgery, in which some of the disks of his spine were removed.

After the surgery, he still experienced chronic back pain that threatened to keep him from working.

He heard about a vest known as Orthotrac™ Pneumatic Vest, a non-invasive treatment designed to relieve back pain and checked to see if his insurance covered it.

"A few weeks later, I got a prescription from my doctor, and I was faithfully wearing it twice a day," said Fairbairn, who noticed immediate relief from the pain he had been experiencing for years.

He now wears the vest in the morning on his days off and in the afternoon after he returns home



A new vest allows people with back pain to undergo traction while standing.

from work, which helps to relieve the pain.

The vest was invented by Matt Dunfee in 1995 after he suffered a herniated disc.

Because traveling to get traction treatments was so time consuming, he decided to invent his own traction device that he could wear while working.

Designing a foam-filled vest, coupled with a weight-lifting belt, Dunfee then lined his vest with vertically positioned bicycle inner tubes. Dunfee's invention was patented as the Lumbar Orthotrac™ Vest, which is now marketed exclusively by Orthofix, Inc.

When the vest is inflated on the patient, 30 to 50 percent of the patient's body weight shifts and relieves the pressure that would otherwise compress the spine.

In a recent test on 300 people, who wore the vest for eight weeks, 67 percent showed significant improvement.

For more information, call Orthofix at 800-535-4492.