

INVERSION TABLES

Inversion therapy is a form of spinal traction (stretching) that might provide relief for some back pain and sciatica sufferers. (1-6) But inversion carries some risks too, so consider these suggestions before you start.

SAFETY FIRST

- Don't use an inversion table if you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, vascular headaches, eye disease (glaucoma, detached retina, etc.), severe osteoporosis, hiatal hernia, heart or vascular problems, including an elevated risk of stroke, or if you are pregnant.
- Inversion can irritate some other conditions, so talk to your doctor before starting if you have ankle, knee, or hip arthritis, a compression fracture, inner ear problems, acid reflux disease, or any other condition of the heart, circulatory system, eye, bone, or balance system.
- Read the safety instructions for your specific inversion table before starting.
- Have a spotter in case you have trouble or need help getting back up.

USING THE TABLE

- Try before you buy. Make sure inversion works for you before you invest dollars and floor space into a table.
- Don't lean back too far. Start at a 10 to 15-degree angle and set the safety strap to max out somewhere between 30 to 60 degrees. There is no need to hang upside down, especially for older adults.
- Sliding off of the table unexpectedly is the most common risk, so buckle in and hold the handles.
- Move slowly into and out of the inverted position.
- Start by using the table for a minute or two once per day, eventually working up to a couple of 3 to 5-minute sessions each day.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Recognize that inversion is not a magic bullet and works best when combined with other professional treatments, like chiropractic care.

Scan for references

