

# High Tech Low Back Treatment

By Dr. Kenneth Oikawa | D.C., A.C.R.B. certified

*The task of finding more effective therapies for low back pain sufferers has baffled researchers for the entire history of modern medicine.*

A past president of the North American Spine Society cited the following; according to the National Center for Health Statistics the number of people disabled from back pain increased 168% from 1971 to 1986 in the United States. This trend has been one that has continued. Mainstream low back therapies simply haven't been very effective.

In spite of this there will always be innovative individuals that refuse to bow to failure. So as time passes research continues. Continued research produces better information. Better information leads to a better understanding. And finally a better understanding combined with a tincture of ingenuity (American!) can lead to the creation of a little magic. As a board certified rehabilitation doctor, I'm pleased to say there is now a little magic to offer a great majority of low back pain sufferers. The magic I'm speaking of is a therapy we call Computerized Lumbar Decompression or CLD. Other names for this therapy include: DRX (decompression, reduction, extraction), IDD (intervertebral differential dynamics), DRS (decompression, reduction, stabilization) or VAD (vertebral axial decompression). We coined the term CLD because we feel other terms can be confusing and that 'Computerized Lumbar Decompression' most accurately describes what this therapy actually does.

So what is CLD therapy? To better understand CLD and for the purposes of this article, traction and decompression

are the same. Most of us know of some type of traction device. The first traction therapies were devised thousands of years ago and were very crude. Evolution has lead to greater sophistication; not too long ago you could walk through an orthopedic ward and see patients harnessed in bed with systems utilizing ropes, pulleys, and weights to create traction. For a while we saw people hanging themselves from bars suspended in doorways using 'gravity boots'. Then, there were modified cots that you could swing on to a head-down position. In my years of practice, I'll occasionally cross paths with a patient saying what they really need is to grab onto something from above and hang for a while. In keeping with this, I recently read a researcher comment expressing that intuitively traction (or decompression) should work!

These older traction or decompression systems didn't work that well, creating very mixed results within the research. Some researchers think they understand why these devices didn't work. While I think we can all agree that each had the outward appearance of creating decompression; in reality these devices were often times actually doing the opposite. In essence, when you pull on an injured body part it's going to react. With an inflamed low back, this reaction involves a protective muscle contraction and this muscle contraction creates compression.

Enter computer technology; perhaps the missing ingredient in the recipe for taking low back treatment to the next level is "a dash

of Pentium". True enough; the word computer doesn't see to be a natural fit when you think about low back treatment. However, through the integration of computer technology a number of essential characteristics to the decompression protocol have been added. First, with computer assistance, this technology is able to pull in such a manner as to not cause a muscle reaction. Secondly, computers create incredible precision allowing for greater control. Greater control allows you to use higher forces in a safe manner. This therapy has been shown to create as much as 200 mm Hg negative pressure within lumbar discs. Researchers are seeing increased hydration in dry and degenerated discs; which is a very good thing. This therapy has also been seen to increase the space between vertebrae; the space the disc occupies. And most importantly, people are getting better. The most current research is showing a success rate of 86%.

Computer Lumbar Decompression can help the majority of low back pain sufferers and because every patient is different, treatment programs will vary. More serious problems can take up to 20 treatments over 4-6 weeks, with each treatment taking only 25 minutes. CLD therapy is being successfully used across the country on a wide range of back problems including: herniated discs, protruding discs, degenerative disc disease, posterior facet syndrome, sciatica, and general low back pain. ■

# Encouraging Families to Get Moving

By Francine Rodd | Executive Director, First 5 Monterey County

*When it comes to nutrition and physical fitness, Californians tend to go with fast and convenient over fit and healthy.*

This can lead to severe problems for children down the road, like heart disease, Type II diabetes, high blood pressure and strokes. With over 16 percent of children ages 0 to 5 and over 59 percent of adults in Monterey County considered overweight, it would seem we all need to work much harder at improving the health and well-being of local children and their families.

As a child's first teacher, parents are instrumental in making key decisions for their children, including what they eat and how much exercise they get. As a community, we have an opportunity to put children on the right track early and show them the proper lifestyle to stay healthy throughout their lives.

As summer approaches and families spend more time outdoors, First 5 Monterey County encourages parents to include physical activity and proper nutrition as part of the daily routine. To help you get started, First 5 Monterey County offers the following fun and easy suggestions for physical activities that not only put your family on the path to better health but can also help prepare your children for school:

• **EXERCISE AS A FAMILY BY TAKING** walks, riding bikes or learning a new sport together.

• **PLAY OUTSIDE TOGETHER.** Teach your children how to hop, skip or jump. Play games such as tag, hide-and-seek, hopscotch or jump rope.

• Go to a playground for activity. While there, ask your children how they feel when they are on the swing or the slide. Have your children draw pictures about your trip to the playground afterwards.

• **SING SONGS AND DANCE** with your children.

• **ACT OUT THE STORIES** in your favorite books. Put on a "play."

• **GO FOR A NATURE WALK OR HIKE.** Point to objects like trees or clouds and ask your children to describe the colors and shapes. Play a game of "How many yellow flowers can you spot?" Talk to your children about the squirrels or birds you see.

• **DANCE** to your favorite music.

• **INCLUDE CHILDREN** in outdoor and indoor family chores by giving them easy tasks such as picking up toys, pulling weeds, sorting laundry or helping to wash the car.

**Most importantly:**

• **GET YOURSELF**

**MOVING.** Research shows that children of parents who exercise are about six times more likely to be active than children whose parents are sedentary. In addition, parents who are obese are more likely to have children who are obese. If you want healthy, physically fit children, it helps to be active yourself.

**AND**

• **TURN OFF THE**

**TELEVISION AND**

**COMPUTER.** Studies

show that there is a direct relationship between childhood obesity and hours spent watching television. Less time spent in front of

a TV, whether it's watching cartoons, videos, playing video games or surfing the Internet, can be more time spent participating in physical activities.

Remember, keeping physically active does not mean that children have to be limited to a sports program or exercise class. Simply giving them plenty of opportunities to run around freely will make a big difference. While the range of possible summertime activities for children is never-ending, First 5 Monterey County hopes families use this summer to create a lifetime of fond memories with endless days of sunshine and plenty of physical activity. For more information on First 5 Monterey County programs, please call (831) 444-8549 or visit [www.first5monterey.org](http://www.first5monterey.org).

## **FIRST 5 MONTEREY COUNTY**

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Monterey County distributes approximately \$5.5 million a year in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs. ■