

Peyronie's Disease: Traction Therapy

This handout explains the role of traction therapy for men with Peyronie's disease. **For an electronic copy of this brochure and more information on Peyronie's, we encourage you to visit our website at www.MensHealthIN.com/services/peyronies-disease.** There we have several educational resources including video content and other handouts. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call the Men's Health Center at (317) 564-5104.



What is traction therapy?

Traction therapy is essentially physical therapy for the penis. When men develop Peyronie's disease, the scar tissue that forms can cause both penile shortening and penile curvature. The penis also loses elasticity, or its ability to stretch when pulled. Traction therapy helps combat these changes by using daily exercises to both stretch and straighten the penis. Men who can regularly perform daily traction therapy often experience significant improvements in penile length and straightness in just 3 months!

Although many men think of traction therapy as awkward when first learning about it, it is generally not painful and is effective for most men. Just as you can't achieve your best possible physique without regular exercise, many men with Peyronie's disease can't achieve their best penis without regular traction therapy.

Who should use traction therapy?

Compared to other treatment options for Peyronie's disease, traction therapy is unique in that it can be used for a wide variety of men.

Traction therapy is essential for men in the active phase of Peyronie's disease as part of multi-modal therapy. It can help some men to minimize existing curvature while simultaneously decreasing curve progression over time. Taking oral medications that may help with active phase Peyronie's disease without using daily traction is like taking protein supplements without ever exercising. It may provide some benefit, but nowhere near as much if daily exercise is included.

For men in the stable phase of Peyronie's disease, traction therapy can still be used to improve curvature on its own. Men who use the RestoreX traction device report an average improvement in penile curvature of 28% and an improvement in penile length of 11% after just 3 months of use. That's a significant improvement without any surgery or injectable medication.

For men undergoing treatment with injectable medications (like Xiaflex), traction therapy is critical. The purpose of injectable medication is to soften the scar tissue caused by Peyronie's, but manual traction still needs to be applied to take advantage of these changes and straighten the penis. Men who used the RestoreX traction device with their Xiaflex treatment reported an average improvement in curvature of almost 50%. Men who used manual modeling, which is traction therapy without a device, reported an improvement just above 30%. Men who fail to perform any traction therapy whatsoever may not see any improvement.

For men undergoing certain procedures to straighten their penis (like plication or plaque excision and grafting) traction therapy can help maximize results and preserve gains in the post-operative period. Men can start traction therapy in anticipation of their procedure and then resume once they've adequately healed thereafter (typically 4 weeks post-procedure).

Who should NOT use traction therapy?

Since traction therapy can benefit such a wide range of men of Peyronie's disease, a better question might be: who does NOT benefit from traction therapy?

For men with both erectile dysfunction and Peyronie's disease, the gold standard treatment is a minimally invasive outpatient procedure known as the penile implant. The implant can both cure erectile dysfunction and correct the vast majority of Peyronie's curves in what is often a 30-minute procedure. The implant is invisible, reliable, and it also stops the progressive loss of length and girth associated with both erectile dysfunction and Peyronie's disease. It does not change sensation, orgasm or ejaculation. It simply restores erection and functional penile anatomy while helping men regain lost size through regular post-operative exercise of the device. For this reason, we do not routinely recommend traction therapy prior to penile implant placement. If you want to learn more about the penile implant, please visit our website at www.MensHealthIN.com/services/peyronies-disease.

What are the different types of traction therapy?

Traction therapy falls into two main categories: 1) traction therapy with a device like RestoreX and 2) traction therapy with hand exercises (also known as manual modeling). Traction devices typically provide better results than manual modeling alone and should be used when possible. However, traction devices frequently aren't covered by insurance and can cost up to \$500 (although they can be purchased using a health savings account or HSA if available). For men who cannot afford that cost, we recommend manual modeling.

What traction device do you recommend?

There are currently several traction devices on the market. Our preferred device for men with Peyronie's disease is the RestoreX device manufactured by PathRight Medical. Although costly at \$500, the RestoreX device has shown superior curve correction with less daily exercise time compared to other available options. This is because it is the only device that can bend against the curve. As a result, men can achieve significant improvements in both penile length and straightness with just two 30-minute sessions a day over 3 months.

After 3 months of therapy with RestoreX alone, 77% of men experienced an improvement in penile curvature and 94% of men experienced an improvement in penile length. The average improvement in straightness was approximately 28% while the average improvement in penile length of 11%. With 3 more months of therapy (for a total of 6 months), men increased their average gains in penile length to a total of 15%.

RestoreX can be purchased directly from the manufacturer at www.RestoreX.com. The device comes with detailed instructions and an exercise plan to help improve both straightness and length. Educational videos on proper device usage can also be found on their website.

What about manual modeling?

For men who can't purchase a dedicated traction device, we recommend manual modeling. Manual modeling may provide curvature correction up to 17-21%. For manual modeling, we recommend the following protocol using 2 distinct exercises: a gentle stretching exercise and a gentle straightening exercise.

Men should perform the penis stretching exercise daily, three times per day, with a non-erect penis. As a helpful hint, the stretching exercise can be done at any time of the day when you don't have an erection. Establishing a routine may make it easier to remember, so try to do the stretching exercise at the same time and place each day. Giving yourself privacy may allow you to feel more comfortable and less rushed.

Stretching Exercise

- 1) Grasp the tip of the penis with the fingers of one hand and hold the base of the penis with the fingers of the other.
- 2) Gently pull the penis away from the body to its full length.
- 3) Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
- 4) Let go and allow the penis to return to normal, unstretched length.

Side View of Penile Stretching Activity

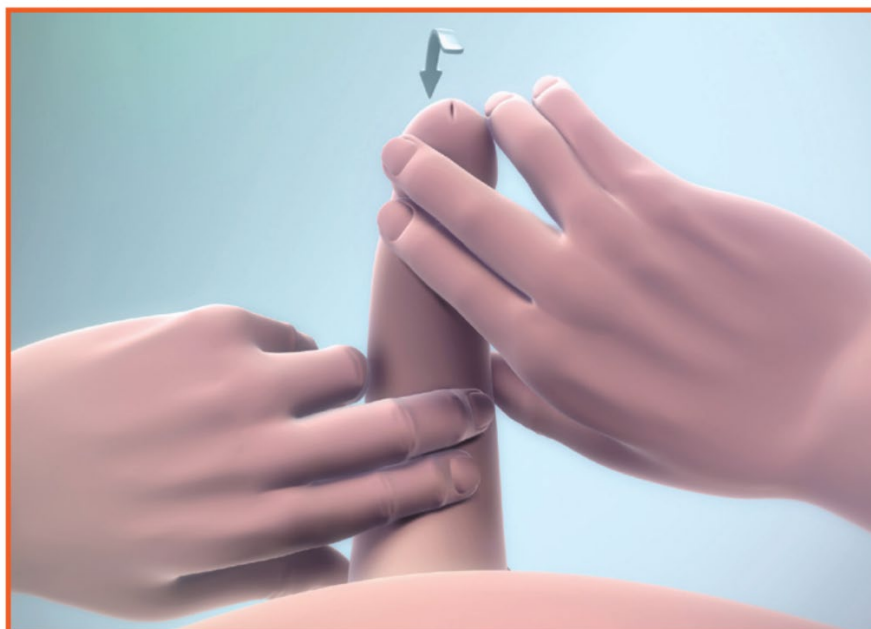


Men should perform the penis straightening exercise no more than once per day and only if a spontaneous erection occurs. If you do not have a spontaneous erection, you should not attempt penile straightening. Bending your penis should not cause any pain or discomfort. As a helpful hint, spontaneous erections can be more common in the morning, just as you are waking up. This might be a good time to do your straightening exercise.

Straightening Exercise

- 1) Gently attempt to bend the shaft of the erect penis in the opposite direction of the curve, but not so forcefully as to produce significant pain or discomfort.
- 2) Hold the penis in this more straightened position for 30 seconds, then let it go.
- 3) Perform this no more than once per day and only if a spontaneous erection unrelated to sexual activity occurs.

Top View of Penile Straightening Activity



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