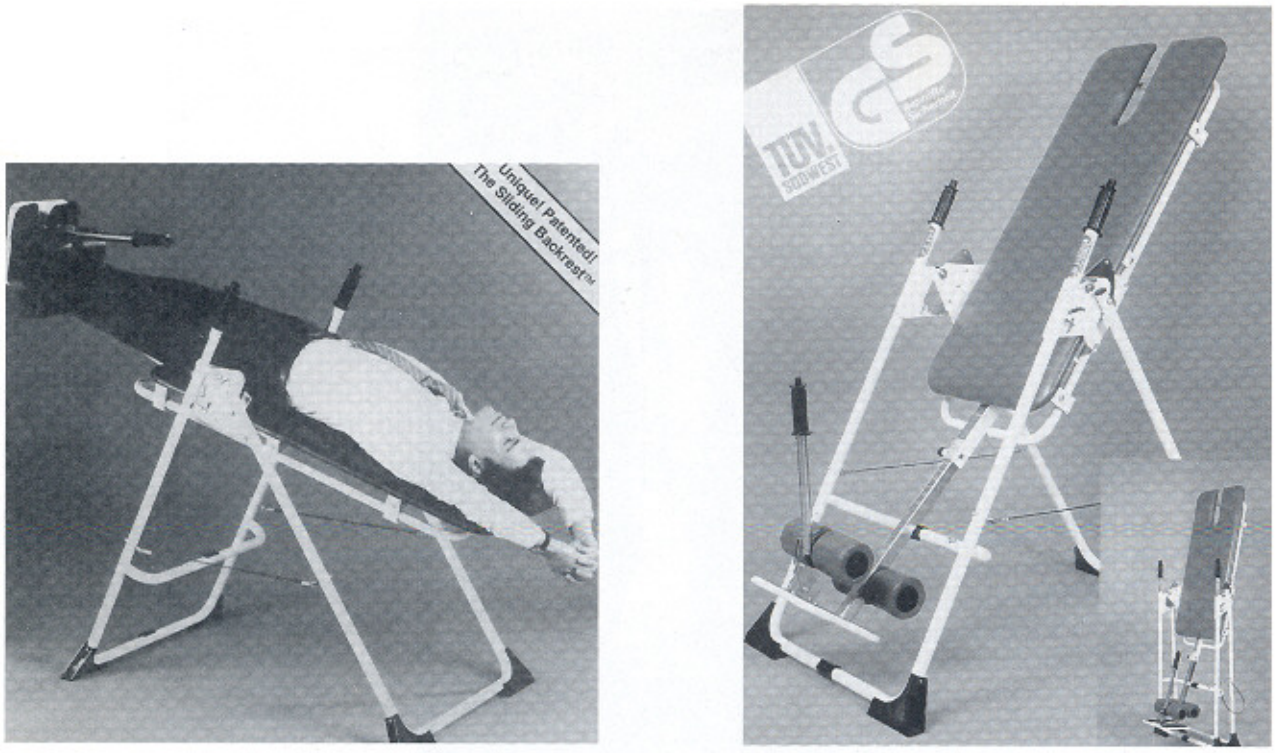

Fig. 7-15 Advertisement for the Swedish Back-A-Traction.
- Patient is fastened into the device at the ankles.
- The bed is adjusted for patient height.
- The release is manually controlled by the patient and can be set for a comfortable angle.
- As each level of inversion is attempted, the table (bed) stops at predetermined angles and must be released by the patient to continue the tilt toward full inversion. *(Courtesy Swedish Back Care System, St. Augustine, Fla.)*

Once the desired inversion is reached, the patient may initiate a mild exercise by flexing and straightening the knees, allowing the bed on which the patient is lying to slide back and forth a few inches. This process is controlled completely by the patient and can be used to enhance the condition of the back. Earlier versions of this device produced full inversion, and some patients incurred problems. In some hypertensive individuals, full inversion has the potential for increasing intraocular pressure, leading to possible damaging effects on blood vessels in the eyes.[11-13] The inversion produced by the modern table is much less than with earlier similar products, therefore decreasing the possibility of damaging effects.[14]

The concept of inversion therapy is to provide for unloading of the lower back, reducing pressure and discomfort. These devices can be used at home and are considered to be adjunctive therapy for the patient. Certain contraindications for use of this therapy must be considered, and some precautions must be taken during the course of the therapy protocol. Patients must be selected carefully, with consideration given to the patient's cardiovascular health (possible hypertension) and the condition of the spine (osteoporosis or arthritic condition).

CERVICAL TRACTION DEVICES: THE PRONEX AND THE PNEU-TRAC

Two of the cervical traction devices available use a pneumatic traction mechanism to create the desired traction. Glacier Cross makes the Pronex, which is used with the patient in a supine position on a bed or other flat surface. The traction is provided by an expandable section over the cervical spine that is inflated by compressing a bulb similar to that on a sphygmomanometer. A headband binds the head into a contoured section designed to pre-