



*During a glorious day of playing golf, and talking and laughing with Payne Stewart in a pro-am just last year, I was struck by the man's qualities.*

*He was a respected national champion.*

*He was a proud father.*

*He was an inspiration to others.*

*He made us feel like a friend.*

*He was a man of God blessed with a great talent for the game of golf.*

*We will miss him greatly and remember him forever fondly.*

*All comfort and care to his family.*



(John Perner is Group Manager for Sports and Entertainment for the Pepsi-Cola Company, and is based in Atlanta.)

## Golf: Meeting the Physical Challenge

By Ross Brakeville, PT

Welcome to "Golf: Meeting the Physical Challenge." Believe it or not, the physical demands of golf are awesome. From strength and flexibility to impeccable coordination, shooting low scores is directly related to physical capacity.

Golf is also recognized for the number of injuries keeping one from the game. As a result, each month I will evaluate a piece of equipment in which the manufacturer advertises a benefit to the physical needs of golfers.

The evaluation will look at a variety of areas related to the efficiency of the product/service and its benefit to golfers. There will be a grading scale on specific items and a final grade on overall value. Grading, which starts after the "evolution of product" section, is based on a 4 point scale.

This month we will look at a product advertised to treat and/or prevent back problems:

The Swedish Back Care System - Back-A-Traction.

### What is the Need for a Product like this?

Low back pain affects over 80% of the population at one time or another. Low back pain is also the number one leading injury in golf. Therefore, quality products and programs, which help or prevent back pain, has tremendous value to golf.



**Master-care**

Back-A-Traction®  
The Swedish Back Care System™

### Description of Product

The Swedish Back Care System - Back-A-Traction, is a unique device developed to relieve pain associated with stresses originating from what the company calls "extreme position syndrome". For example, those who have to sit for prolonged periods (desk work, driving) or work in a forward-bent position (golf set up). Back-A-Traction combines the recognized benefits of inversion AND traction. It has a patented sliding bed for traction and controlled inversion with stops at 15 and 30 degrees maximum.

Physical Therapists have used traction as a means to treat low back syndromes for decades. Inversion has been identified as an excellent means to treat or prevent low back problems including disc disease. Inversion however, has had its complications. Many systems, including the inversion boots where someone was completely upside-down, had problems with elevated ocular and blood pressure. Therefore, controlling the degree of tilt during inversion can help minimize these potentially harmful pressure changes.

### Product/Program Evolution

The first prototype of the Back-A-Traction was seen in Sweden in 1987 and is still manufactured in Sweden. Introduction into the US market was in 1996. Studies on product effectiveness include: Volvo Aero Corporation from August 1992 through September 1993 titled "Effects of gravity-facilitated traction of the lumbar spine in persons with chronic low back pain at the workplace" and a current study conducted at the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm comparing routine physical therapy with application of the Back-A-Traction. In addition to effects on work related disorders, Swedish Olympic athletes use the Back-A-Traction before and after events.

### GRADING

#### Potential for Harm 1/4 (minimal)

Conditions such as hypertension, ocular pressure, and an unstable spine could be negatively effected.

<b>Ease of Use</b>	4/4 (excellent)
Comes with an easy to understand video.	
<b>Equipment Construction/</b>	
<b>Durability</b>	4/4 (excellent)
Manufactured in Sweden and awarded the German Safety Certificate "TUV", the machine is well constructed and designed with safety in mind.	
<b>Does it Work</b>	4/4 (excellent)
Yes! Due to the unique combination of the sliding bed, controlled inversion (15 - 20 degrees) and traction.	
<b>Benefit/Cost Ratio</b>	4/1 (excellent)
When you figure the cost of a moderate to severe back injury with time off work can be in the tens of thousands of dollars, it is an excellent investment.	
<b>Overall Score</b>	3+4
Although an excellent piece of equipment, especially for prevention of low back problems, without total management, risk factors for back pathology are still very high.	

Ross Brakeville, PT, is Director of Physical Therapy at Physiotherapy Associates in Woodstock. Brakeville conducts seminars and workshops for professional and amateur golfers, and hosts a segment on "The Golf Show" with Doug Hollandsworth. He can be reached at 770-517-0249.