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Simple, cheap and non-invasive intraoperative traction of the femur in amputees

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Several methods of traction of proximal femoral fractures in amputees have been described previously. Steinman pin traction carries the risk

of infection and soft tissue destruction. Traction using a hand trap requires added expense and it is not always readily available. We describe a method of traction using standard equipment found in the orthopaedic trauma theatre during lower limb traction.

The telescopic traction bar is shortened maximally. The footplate and shoe are turned upside down. The flexed amputated knee is then secured in the shoe as would normally be a foot (Fig 1). Rotation, traction, abduction and adduction manoeuvres are performed as normal.

Figure 1 Intraoperative traction of the femur in an amputee