

5 THE EVENING RESET: MOVES TO UNWIND YOUR LOWER BACK BEFORE BED



Plus a 2-minute morning wake-up and a couch-and-bed setup checklist

A Free Guide from the team at Back To Health Clinics

5 Movements

Do these in order, right before you settle onto the couch or into bed. Move slowly and breathe the whole time. You should feel a gentle stretch or ease — never sharp, shooting, or radiating pain. If a move hurts, skip it and let our team know at your next visit.



Back To Health
Chiropractic

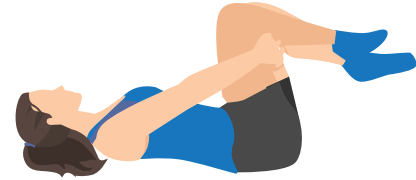
Movement #1

Knee-to-Chest Rocks

Why it helps:

Gently opens up the lower back after hours of sitting and gives your lumbar joints some easy movement before rest.

1. Lie on your back on a mat or rug with your knees bent and feet flat.
2. Bring both knees toward your chest and hold the backs of your thighs (not your kneecaps).
3. Rock slowly side to side, about 2 inches each way, like a gentle cradle.
4. Keep your head and shoulders relaxed on the floor



Dose:

30–60 seconds.

Make it easier:

Bring one knee up at a time and keep the other foot on the floor.

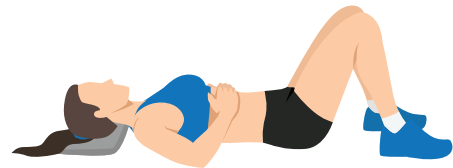
Movement #2

Supine Pelvic Tilts

Why it helps:

Wakes up the deep core and teaches your lower back to move in small, controlled ranges instead of guarding.

1. Stay on your back with your knees bent and feet flat, hip-width apart.
2. Exhale and gently flatten your lower back into the floor by tipping your pelvis back.
3. Inhale and let your lower back return to a small, natural arch.
4. Keep the movement small — your hips stay on the floor.



Dose:

10 slow reps.

Cue:

“Tip a bowl of water back, then level it again.”

Movement #3

Half-Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch

Why it helps:

Long hours of sitting shorten the hip flexors, which attach to the front of the lumbar spine. Loosening them can take tension off the lower back when you lie flat.

1. Kneel on a pillow with your right knee down and left foot forward, both knees at about 90 degrees.
2. Tuck your tailbone slightly under and squeeze your right glute.
3. Shift your weight gently forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your right hip.
4. Keep your chest tall; don't arch your lower back.
5. Switch sides.

Dose:

30 seconds per side, 2 rounds.

Make it easier:

Hold the back of a couch or chair for balance.



Movement #4

Figure-Four Stretch

Why it helps:

Opens the glutes and deep hip rotators, which often tighten along with the sacroiliac (SI) joint.

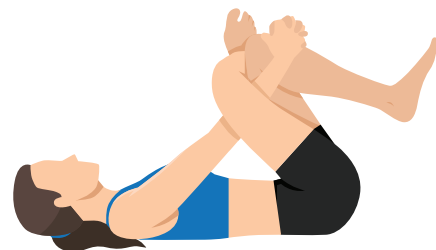
1. Lie on your back with both knees bent.
2. Cross your right ankle over your left knee, making a "4" shape.
3. Hold behind your left thigh and gently draw it toward your chest until you feel a stretch in your right buttock.
4. Keep your head down and shoulders relaxed.
5. Switch sides.

Dose:

30 seconds per side, 2 rounds.

Cue:

Keep your left foot on the floor and simply let the right knee fall open.



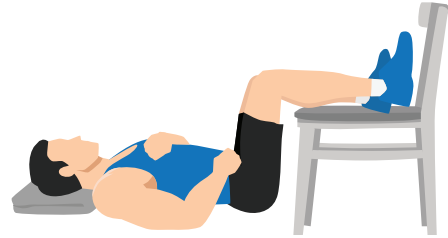
Movement #5

Legs-Up Breathing (90/90 Position)

Why it helps:

Takes load off the lower back while slow breathing helps your nervous system shift out of “go mode” and into rest.

1. Lie on your back near the couch and rest your calves on the seat, so your hips and knees are both bent at about 90 degrees.
2. Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly.
3. Breathe in through your nose for 4 counts, letting your belly rise.
4. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 counts, letting your belly fall.



Dose:

2–3 minutes.

Cue:

Do this one with the lights down — it’s a great last step before bed.

BONUS:

2-Minute Morning Wake-Up (2 Moves)

Your spinal discs soak up fluid overnight, so they’re fuller first thing in the morning. That’s why the first hour after waking is a good time to move gently and skip deep forward bending, like touching your toes or hauling heavy laundry baskets.

Movement #6

Cat-Cow

Why it helps:

Eases morning stiffness by moving each segment of your spine through a small, comfortable range.

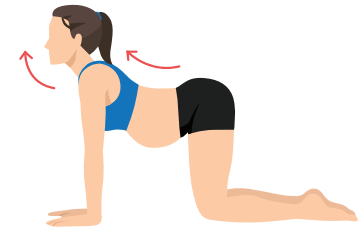
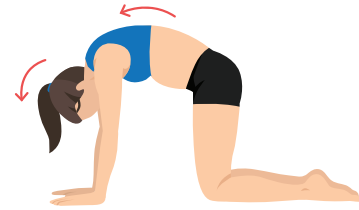
1. Start on your hands and knees, hands under shoulders and knees under hips.
2. Inhale and let your belly drop gently as you lift your chest and tailbone (cow).
3. Exhale and round your back toward the ceiling, tucking your chin and tailbone (cat).
4. Stay within a comfortable range; this is movement, not a stretch contest.

Dose:

8–10 slow reps.

Cue:

Do it seated on the edge of your bed with hands on your knees.



Movement #7

Standing Back Extension

Why it helps:

Gently reverses the curled-up position of sleep and the forward bending of your day ahead.

1. Stand with your feet hip-width apart.
2. Place your palms on the back of your hips, fingers pointing down.
3. Gently lean back from your hips while looking forward, not up.
4. Return to standing tall.

Dose:

5 slow reps.

Skip it if:

It causes pain that travels into your buttock or leg. Try an extra round of cat-cow instead.



At-Home Care Tips

To Unwind Your Lower Back

Couch setup checklist

- Sit toward the front half of the cushion instead of sinking into the back
- Keep both feet flat on the floor or on an ottoman
- Tuck a small rolled towel or lumbar pillow behind your lower back
- Skip the one-leg-tucked-under position
- Get up every 20–30 minutes — refill your water, pause the show, walk to the kitchen
- Want to lie down? Lie on your back with a pillow under your knees instead of slumping sideways

Sleep setup

- **Side sleepers:** Keep your knees stacked with a pillow between them so your pelvis stays level.
- **Back sleepers:** Put a pillow under your knees to take pressure off your lower back.
- **Stomach sleepers:** Try easing toward side-sleeping. If you can't, place a thin pillow under your hips.
- **Mattress check:** If your mattress sags in the middle or is more than 8–10 years old, it may be time to look at a new one.
- **Getting out of bed:** Roll onto your side, drop your legs off the edge, and push up with your arms instead of sitting straight up.

Heat before rest

A warm (not hot) heating pad or warm shower for 15–20 minutes before bed can help guarded back muscles relax. Use a towel between your skin and the pad, and never fall asleep on a heating pad.

Move after dinner

A 10–15 minute walk after dinner keeps your spine moving before the longest still stretch of your day. Around West Michigan, that could be a loop through your neighborhood, the Lake Michigan shoreline, or a local trail.

Wind down your nervous system

- Set a “work’s done” moment each night — close the laptop and put your phone on the charger.
- Pair the Evening Reset with legs-up breathing (Move 5) to signal your body that it’s safe to rest.
- Notice if your back pain flares on weekends or vacations; that’s useful information to share with our team.

Before you start

These moves are gentle, but they aren’t right for everyone. **Stop and check with a healthcare provider if a move causes sharp, shooting, or radiating pain, numbness, or tingling.** If you’re pregnant, recovering from surgery, or have a diagnosed spine condition, ask your provider or our team before starting.

Get emergency care right away if you notice:

- Numbness in your groin, inner thighs, or “saddle” area
- New trouble controlling your bladder or bowels
- Sudden weakness in one or both legs
- Severe back pain after a fall or accident

Talk to your doctor soon if your back pain:

- Comes with fever, chills, or unexplained weight loss
- Is constant and severe no matter how you move or rest
- Improves with exercise, doesn’t improve with rest, and wakes you in the second half of the night (especially if it started before age 40)

Still feel it when you finally relax?

Your back is telling you something, and you don’t have to figure it out alone. Our team will look at how your spine moves, how your muscles are guarding, and how your daily routine plays in — then build a care plan around you.

Schedule Your Evaluation Today

Three convenient Michigan locations:

 Call us:

- **Zeeland/Holland:** 616.546.3500
- **Portage:** 269.345.2273
- **Muskegon:** 231.830.1111

 Online scheduling: <https://bthclinics.com/locations>

Most patients can be seen within 24-48 hours

Connect with us

- Instagram: @backtohealthchiroclinics
- Facebook: Back To Health Chiropractic (location-specific pages)
- TikTok: @backtohealthchiroMI
- YouTube: @backtohealthchiropractic9130

© 2026 Back To Health Chiropractic. All rights reserved.

This guide is for general educational purposes only and is not a substitute for an plan. Results vary from person to person. Always consult with your healthcare provider before beginning any new exercise program during pregnancy, especially if you have any high-risk conditions or complications.

Downloaded your free guide? Awesome!

Now schedule your appointment and let’s get you feeling even better <https://bthclinics.com/locations>

