

IF YOUR LOW BACK FEELS **LOCKED UP** EVERY MORNING— DO THIS FIRST

Low Back Morning Stiffness Reset Protocol

First Steps for the First Few Minutes
After Waking

- **1 ROLL TO YOUR SIDE**
Before sitting up.
- **2 PUSH UP WITH YOUR ARMS**
Use your arms to get up.
- **3 STAND TALL FOR 30–60 SECONDS**
Let your body adjust upright.
- **4 WALK FOR 2–5 MINUTES**
Short walking helps calm morning stiffness.
- **5 GENTLE SUPPORT MOTION**
Do 5 small, controlled back bends or pelvic rocks if tolerated. Stay in a tolerable range.



RED FLAG PROTOCOL

STOP and seek immediate medical attention if you experience:

- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Numbness or tingling in the groin or inner thigh
- Sudden severe weakness in both legs
- Chest pain, dizziness, or difficulty breathing during movement
- Symptoms that are rapidly worsening



STOP and consult a licensed provider before continuing if you experience:

- New or increasing numbness or tingling down the leg or into the foot
- Sharp shooting pain that worsens with every attempt at movement
- Significant increase in symptoms after two or more sessions
- Fever, unexplained weight loss, or night pain that wakes you from sleep



If you experience sharp pain, numbness, tingling, or any symptoms listed in the red flag section — stop immediately and consult a healthcare provider.



Pain Care Supply

Low Back Morning Stiffness

Reset Protocol

First Steps for the First Few Minutes After Waking

If your low back feels locked up every morning, you are not alone — and you are not broken. Morning stiffness after a night of rest is one of the most common patterns in people managing low back pain. This protocol walks you through a simple, structured sequence to help your body transition from rest to movement with less strain on your low back.

This is not a workout. It is not a stretch routine. It is a reset — a way to move your body through the first few minutes of the day with intention, not guesswork.

WHY MORNING IS THE HARDEST PART

While you sleep, your spinal discs rehydrate and your supporting muscles rest in a shortened position. When you wake up, the spine is under increased internal pressure and the surrounding tissues have not yet warmed up. That combination creates the stiffness and heaviness you feel in the first minutes after getting out of bed.

Most people make it worse — by sitting up abruptly, by bending over immediately to put on shoes, or by pushing through the stiffness rather than easing through it. This protocol replaces those habits with a structured sequence that respects how the spine behaves in the morning.

How does your low back feel most mornings when you first wake up? Think about that as you read through this protocol — it will help you identify which steps matter most for your pattern.

THE 5-STEP MORNING RESET SEQUENCE

1 Roll to Your Side — Before Sitting Up

Before you do anything else, roll onto your side. Keep your knees slightly bent. This takes the direct loading off your lumbar spine and gives you a mechanical advantage when you are ready to get up. Avoid sitting straight up from a flat position — this creates a significant flexion demand on a spine that is not yet ready for it.

2 Push Up With Your Arms — Not Your Back

From your side, use your arms to push yourself up to a seated position. Let your legs swing off the edge of the bed as you rise. This keeps your low back in a more neutral position during the transition from lying to sitting. Pause here for a moment before standing.

3 Stand Tall for 30 to 60 Seconds

Once you are on your feet, stand upright. Do not immediately walk, stretch, or move into any position. Just stand. This allows your body to begin the process of loading your spine in its natural upright position and gives the surrounding tissues a moment to respond. Many people feel an immediate shift in stiffness within the first 30 seconds of simply standing.

4 Walk for 2 to 5 Minutes

Short, gentle walking is one of the most effective tools for reducing morning low back stiffness. Walking promotes circulation to spinal tissues, gently loads the spine in a rhythmic pattern, and helps the nervous system begin processing normal movement signals. This does not need to be fast or far. A slow walk through your home is enough.

5 Gentle Support Motion — If Tolerated

Once you have walked, you may add 5 small, controlled back bends or pelvic rocks — whichever feels more natural for your body. These are not stretches. They are small movements that invite the spine to begin exploring its range without loading it into discomfort. Stay within a tolerable range. If either movement increases your symptoms, skip it and stay with walking only.

WHAT THIS PROTOCOL IS — AND WHAT IT IS NOT

This protocol is a structured way to reduce the mechanical load on your low back during the most vulnerable window of your day. It works by sequencing movement in a way that respects how the spine behaves after a period of rest.

This protocol is not:

- A treatment for any specific condition
- A replacement for evaluation or care from a licensed healthcare provider
- A guarantee of symptom reduction
- Appropriate for every individual or every low back presentation

If your symptoms are worsening, not responding, or changing in a new way, stop and consult a licensed provider before continuing.

HOW TO USE THIS PROTOCOL

Follow the sequence in order each morning.

Do not rush. Give each step its full time.

Pay attention to your symptoms throughout. If a step increases your pain, skip it and stay with the steps that feel tolerable.

Track how you feel over several days — not just one morning. One morning is not enough information.

Patterns over time are.

This protocol can be used alongside other care. It is not designed to replace your current treatment plan.

TRACKING YOUR RESPONSE

Progress with low back stiffness is not always linear. A useful way to track your response to this protocol is to note three things each morning:

- How stiff did you feel before starting the sequence — on a simple scale of low, moderate, or high?
- How did you feel after completing all five steps?
- How long did it take before you felt like you could move normally?

Over time, you are looking for a pattern — not perfection. If mornings are getting easier to navigate, the protocol is working. If they are not changing or are getting worse, that is important information worth discussing with your provider.

After a week of using this sequence, ask yourself: are mornings still the hardest part of your day — or has something started to shift?

■ RED FLAG PROTOCOL — Stop Immediately

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