BACK PAIN

Your exercise guide and practice log



ILLUSTRATED EXERCISES. FILLABLE WORKSHEETS.

Companion to the Toward Health Back Pain Protocol.

Print this packet or complete the blank fields digitally. Follow the instructions in the numbered worksheet pages.

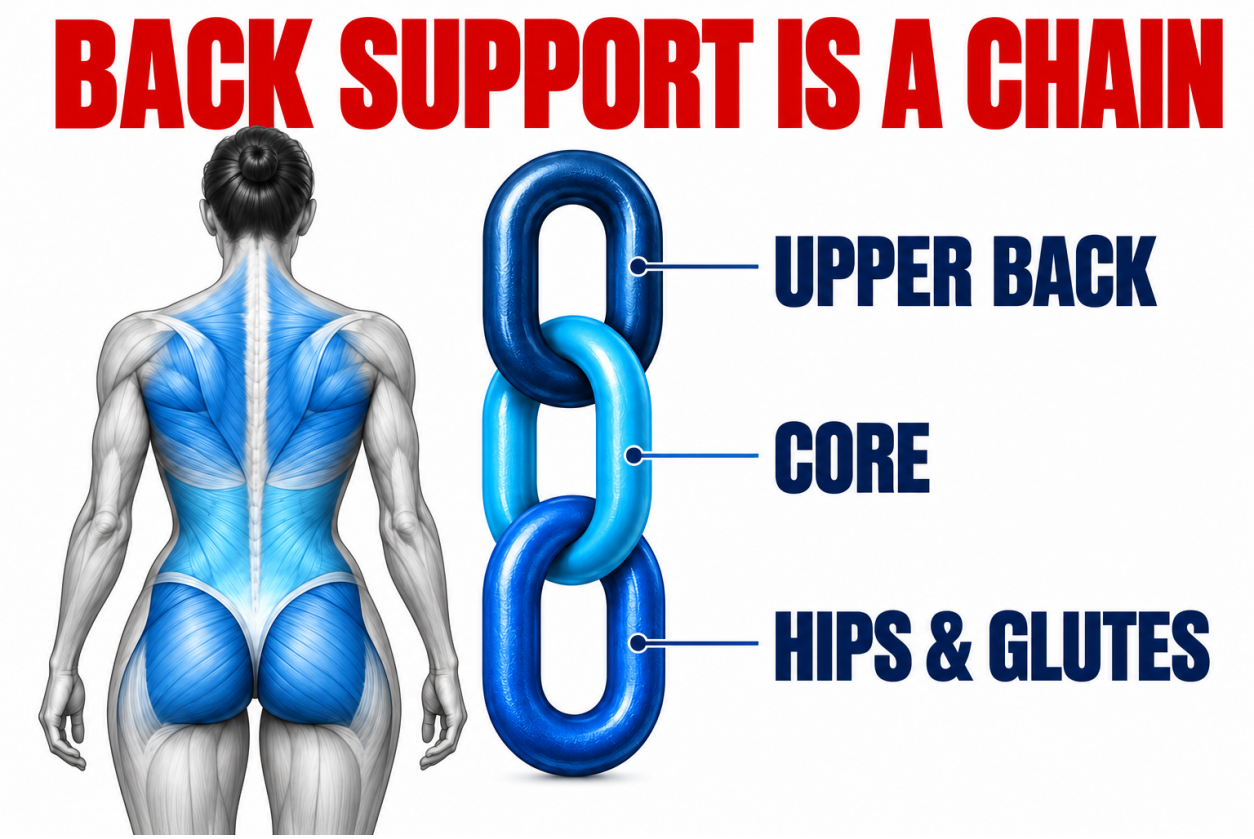
Inside this companion

Exercise instructions / illustrated movement examples / blank fillable worksheets

Page references use the printed worksheet numbers after this cover.

BACK PAIN

A connected approach to back support



Work on every link: upper-back posture, thoracic movement and lat support; a steady core; and mobile hips with strong glutes. Together, they share movement and load.

Comfort and control guide the plan

Do not do anything that hurts. Move slowly through a pain-free range and breathe normally. Choose exercises you can control; you do not need to do every option. Let comfort guide repetitions and hold time. Use the log to track your response.

Before you begin

A physical therapist can help choose a starting level if pain or leg symptoms make exercise difficult.

Seek emergency assessment for new difficulty passing urine, loss of bladder or bowel control, numbness around the genitals or anus, or severe or rapidly worsening leg weakness. Do not use this exercise plan to manage those symptoms.

Start with comfortable movement

Walking goal On a level route, walk for as long as feels comfortable today. Record the minutes.
If your back feels as usual the next morning, add a little time on a later walk.

Pick manageable options from each link. Use a small range or short hold that stays pain-free.

UPPER BACK

Thoracic extensions

Sit with the upper back supported by a chair back. Gently extend over it without arching the lower back.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



UPPER BACK

Foot-supported dead hang - optional

Use a secure overhead bar and keep your feet supported to control the load. Keep shoulders and back comfortable; do not jump into the hang or force a stretch.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



CORE

Knee plank and knee side plank

Support yourself on your forearms and knees. Keep the trunk steady and use a short, comfortable hold.

KNEE PLANK / KNEE SIDE PLANK



CORE

Dead bug

Lie on your back. Slowly reach one arm and the opposite leg, using a small range that keeps the trunk steady.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



Start with comfortable movement

Pick manageable options from each link. Use a small range or short hold that stays pain-free.

CORE

Bird dog

Start on hands and knees. Slowly reach the opposite arm and leg without twisting or arching the back.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



HIPS & GLUTES

Supported 90/90 hip mobility

Use support and adjust the leg positions to keep hips and knees comfortable. Do not force the stretch.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



HIPS & GLUTES

Glute bridge or bodyweight hip thrust

Lift through the hips without arching the lower back. Choose the supported version you can control.

ILLUSTRATED: GLUTE BRIDGE



Build control gradually

Keep working on comfortable posture, thoracic extension and upper-back/lat control. Change positions regularly instead of holding yourself rigidly.

CORE

Full plank or side plank

Progress from your knees only when you can maintain a steady position. A stable plank with one foot lifted is another option.

FULL PLANK / SIDE PLANK

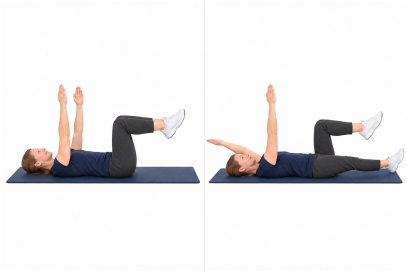


CORE

Longer dead-bug or bird-dog reaches

Increase the reach gradually while keeping the trunk still.

ILLUSTRATED: DEAD BUG



CORE

Pallof press

With a light band anchored securely at chest height, press your hands forward without letting the band rotate your trunk.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



Build control gradually

Keep working on comfortable posture, thoracic extension and upper-back/lat control. Change positions regularly instead of holding yourself rigidly.

CORE

Kneeling stir-the-pot

Rest forearms on a stable exercise ball with knees supported. Make small, controlled circles without arching or twisting.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



HIPS & GLUTES

Single-leg bridge or hip thrust

Keep the pelvis level. Keep both feet down if that gives you better control. Progress hip mobility only through a comfortable range.

ILLUSTRATED: SINGLE-LEG BRIDGE



The progression rule

Increase one thing at a time: repetitions, hold time, range, resistance or difficulty. Keep exercise pain-free and your back no worse the following morning. If symptoms increase, do less or use an easier version.

Illustrations show the named example beside each entry.

Later options - when you are ready

These are options, not required milestones. Keep only the movements you can perform without pain and with a steady, controlled position.

CORE

Full-plank stir-the-pot

Progress from the kneeling version to a full plank on the ball. Keep circles small and the trunk steady.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



CORE

Slow mountain climber

From a stable plank, bring one knee forward at a time without bouncing or twisting.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



CORE

Side plank with top leg lifted

Maintain your side-plank position as you lift the top leg. Lower it if your pelvis drops or turns.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



CORE

Hanging knee raise

Hang comfortably from a secure bar. Raise your knees slowly without swinging or arching your back.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



Later options - when you are ready

These are options, not required milestones. Keep only the movements you can perform without pain and with a steady, controlled position.

HIPS & GLUTES

Loaded glute bridge or hip thrust

Add resistance gradually while keeping movement at the hips and the pelvis controlled.

ILLUSTRATED: LOADED BRIDGE



HIPS & GLUTES

Seated good morning

Start with a small, unweighted hip hinge from a stable seat. Keep the movement controlled and pain-free.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



HIPS & GLUTES

Cossack squat

Shift into a supported side squat. Start shallow and use support as needed; do not force depth or stretch through pain.

MOVEMENT / POSITION



Stop the movement or hold before you lose control. Scale back if symptoms increase.

Your plan and practice log

Name _____ Date range _____

Choose a comfortable option for each link. Use the same or different stages as needed. There is no fixed repetition, hold-time or weekly target.

LINK	MY EXERCISE / VERSION
Upper back	
Core	
Hips & glutes	
Walking goal (minutes)	

PRACTICE 1

Date

Exercise / reps, hold time, range or resistance

Walk (minutes)

Back after walk: next morning

Comfort during / after

Following morning

Next time: keep / ease / progress

PRACTICE 2

Date

Exercise / reps, hold time, range or resistance

Walk (minutes)

Back after walk: next morning

Comfort during / after

Following morning

Next time: keep / ease / progress

PRACTICE 3

Date

Exercise / reps, hold time, range or resistance

Walk (minutes)

Back after walk: next morning

Comfort during / after

Following morning

Next time: keep / ease / progress

Print another log page as needed. Progress only with pain-free control and no next-morning worsening.