



# The Strong Back Guide for Dads: 9 Strategies for Managing Flare-ups

Move with confidence and take back control of your body with clear, practical strategies to calm flare-ups fast, reduce pain, and ease stiffness so you can get back on your feet and live life on your own terms.



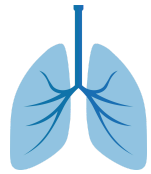
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# 01

## Your Go-to Flare-up Strategy

Quick Relief Actions: Things to Do to Calm Back Pain Fast



### **Stop and Breathe –**

Pause what you're doing, take slow deep breaths 4 sec in and out, and avoid panicked movements. Try to remember that this will pass



### **Gentle Position**

**Change** – Shift into a supported position (lying on your back with knees bent or on your side with a pillow) to ease pressure.



### **Short Walk or Movement –**

If possible, take a gentle 1–2 minute walk to prevent stiffening up.



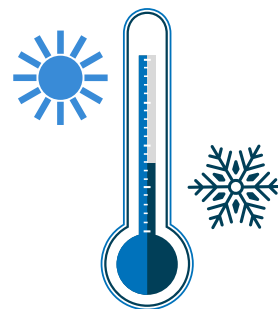
### **Targeted Stretch/Mobility Move –**

Lightly try a safe movement (like knee-to-chest, pelvic tilts, or supported back extensions if they feel good).



### **Stay Calm, Not Still –**

Avoid total bed rest; light, safe movement is key to reducing flare-up intensity.



**Use Heat or Cold** – Apply whichever helps you most (heat for stiffness, cold for sharp pain).



### **Reset Your Mindset –**

Remind yourself flare-ups are temporary, not permanent setbacks.

# 02 Pain Positions to Avoid (and What to Do Instead)

## **Awkward lifting (e.g., lifting kids, laundry baskets)**

☞ Instead: Keep objects close to your body, brace your core by drawing your belly button in and tightening the sphincter muscles, and avoid twisting while lifting.

## **Getting straight up out of bed**

This action can be problematic especially after waking as our discs dehydrate overnight.

☞ Instead: Roll on to your front and push yourself up from there.

## **Changing Your Little One**

Try not to bend down to change your baby

☞ Instead: Try to bring the platform higher or change your position to a lower level

## **Prolonged Sitting**

Try to get up every 5-10min if possible. However sometimes we just can't avoid it.

☞ In that case use a cushion in the small of your lower back, sit on a firm surface, shift your legs back behind you, and don't slouch. Even doing just one of these will help

## **Bending at the waist**

This action often irritates the lower back area, especially discs.

☞ Instead: Use a "hip hinge" as if bending down on one side to pick up a golf ball. Bend forward lifting one leg back behind you. That shifts the emphasis from your back to your hips

# 03 Back-Friendly Sleeping Positions

| The wrong sleeping position can be one of the biggest pain triggers:  
Here are three options, plus the benefits of each:



**1** Side sleeping with pillow between knees & under the waist curve reduces spinal rotation, side-bending and compression .

**2** Back sleeping with pillow under knees  
Offloads lumbar tension by tilting pelvis into a more neutral position

**3** Reclined sleeping with knees elevated (if severe pain)  
Try propping yourself slightly with a wedge or in a recliner with lumbar support if lying flat is intolerable





# 04

## Morning Mobility Sequence

Mornings are often, (but not always) the stiffest and most painful time of day for people with back pain. This short, gentle sequence is designed to wake up your body, reduce pressure on your spine, and help you start the day with more comfort and confidence — all in under 10-minutes. Click on the link below:

**[Click here for your 10-min morning mobility routine](#)**



# 05 The Pain-Stress Loop — and How to Break It

## How Stress, Fear, and Tension Feed Your Pain (and What to Do About It)

1

### **Deep Belly Breathing (2-3min):**

Lie on your back, place one hand on your chest and one on your belly. Inhale slowly into your belly (only the lower hand should rise). Exhale gently. Repeat for 2-3min to shift your body into a (parasympathetic) calm state.

2

### **Build a Pre-bed Routine:**

A good night's sleep starts the evening before. Build in a series of habits such as going to bed at the same time, avoiding caffeine and heavy meals close to bed time, no screens late at night, keep your room dark and quiet. Be very consistent with this!

3

### **Measure & Track your Stress Levels:**

Heart rate and blood pressure are reliable methods to assess how calm and relaxed you are. Each morning or before & after your deep belly breathing exercise, measure one or both of these and keep track of your numbers over time



# 06 Core Strength That Protects Your Spine

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Build Strength Without Stressing Your Back



A strong core acts like a brace for your spine — helping to reduce pain, improve posture, and prevent future flare-ups. But when you're wrestling with back pain, traditional ab workouts like sit-ups and crunches can do more harm than good. Instead, focus on safe, spine-friendly movements that build deep core stability without bending or straining your back.

Click on the following link for a short, daily series of core-based exercises that will help you move with less risk and more confidence...

**[Click here for your strength routine!](#)**

# 07 Eating to Ease Inflammation

What you eat won't eliminate back pain overnight — but it can either feed inflammation or help reduce it. Many people with chronic back pain find that changing their diet improves energy, sleep, and recovery. This section shows you how to support your healing from the inside out.

## Anti-Inflammatory Foods to Focus On:

**Leafy greens** (spinach, kale, rocket)

**Oily fish** (salmon, sardines, mackerel)

**Colourful fruits** (blueberries, pineapple)

**Nuts & seeds** (walnuts, flaxseeds, chia)

**Spices** like turmeric and ginger

**Whole, unprocessed foods** — aim for meals made from scratch when possible

## Common Inflammatory Triggers to Limit:

**Processed foods** and refined sugar (e.g. packaged snacks, sweets)

**Seed oils** (vegetable oil, sunflower oil)

Excess **caffeine and alcohol**

White bread, pasta, and **heavily processed carbs**



# 08 Weight Control for Pain Control

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Carrying extra weight — especially around the midsection — puts more strain on the lower back and spinal discs. While weight isn't the only factor in disc pain, managing it can significantly reduce pressure, inflammation, and daily discomfort.

## Here's Why It Matters:

- Every extra pound adds compressive force to your spine
- Belly fat pulls your pelvis forward, increasing strain on the lumbar discs
- Fat cells release inflammatory chemicals, which can worsen nerve sensitivity



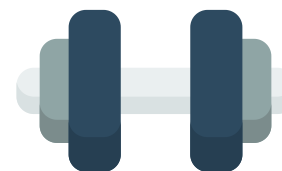
## Calorie Deficit

Make sure you're burning more calories than you're eating by 300-500kcal per day



## Less Sugar

Cut out refined sugar (e.g white rice, white bread, pasta, fizzy drinks) and choose whole, complex carbs instead



## Strength Training

Engage in full body strength training 2-3x per week (e.g pushing, pulling, twisting, lunging squatting: use light to moderate weights, 12-15 reps per set, 3 sets for each exercise)



## Prioritise Sleep

Make use of a pre-bed time routine, avoiding caffeine & alcohol in the evening, and engage in relaxing activities (hot bath, reading, listening to music)



## Stress Management

Slow, deep breathing, spending time in nature, slowing down, daily walking, exposure to sunlight

# 09 The Daily Tracker

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## Track What Matters - Spot What's Working

When you're dealing with back pain, it can feel like your symptoms change from day to day — and it's hard to know why. This tracker helps you take the guesswork out of your recovery.

By logging just a few key details each day, you'll start to notice patterns, triggers, and small wins you might otherwise miss. This gives you more control — and gives your healthcare providers better insights too.

1

### Sleep Quality (1-10)

1 = awful, 10 = great. Helps you link sleep and pain levels

2

### Morning Pain (1-10)

Rate your pain on waking —  
discs often hurt most in the morning

3

### Worst Time of Day

When your pain flared (e.g., morning, after sitting, evening)

4

### Activities that Helped

Anything that reduced pain (e.g., walking,  
lying down, specific stretches)

5

### Things that made it worse

Any clear triggers (e.g., sitting in car, bending, stress)