



# Self-Care for the Low Back & Spine

It is very important to reduce tension and increase flexibility in the low back and spine. The gentle exercises below encourage pelvic stretch and strengthening, and will bring movement to the low back and spine while helping to reduce tension. You can do these at home on the floor or a yoga mat. As with all exercise, go at your own pace.

## Pelvic Tilt

Start by lying on your back, with your feet flat on the floor.

1. As you inhale, press the tip of your tail bone into the floor. This should create a gentle arch in your low back.
2. As you exhale, curl your tailbone up off the floor. This should cause a gentle rounding of your low back.
3. Repeat this series a few times. Let the breath guide your movements and relax deeply.

## Pelvic Lift

Start by lying on your back, with your feet flat on the floor.

1. As you inhale, lift your whole lower back off the floor, using your arms for support.
2. With your exhale, roll back down slowly, start by lowering your upper torso first. Your tailbone should be the last thing to come back down.
3. Repeat this series a few times. Let the breath guide your movements and relax deeply.
4. To finish this series, bring your knees together and tuck them into your chest. Gently roll side-to-side.

## Cow-Cat

Start with your hands and knees on the floor in a table top position.

1. Get into a table-top position by placing your hands and knees on floor.
2. As you inhale, arch like an angry cat. This will cause a tucking of your pelvis and low back and your head will face down and inward.
3. On the exhale, bring head and tailbone up. This will cause an arch of your pelvis and low back and your head will now face out and upwards.
4. Repeat this series a few times. Let the breath guide your movements and relax deeply.
5. To finish this series, bring one knee up to your chest and extend the leg back. Think about stretching your body out in each direction. Repeat with the other leg.

## Corpse Pose

1. Lie on your back and progressively tighten all muscle groups. Start with your feet, and work up towards your head.
2. Release with an exhale.
3. Repeat a few times.
4. To finish, lie flat with feet turned out and arms spread out. Close eyes... Relax...

These exercises are recommended by experts at UCSF Osher Center.

Adapted from:

[www.osher.ucsf.edu/patient/self-care/lowback.html](http://www.osher.ucsf.edu/patient/self-care/lowback.html)

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