

## IX. What to Do About Back Spasms?

Back spasms are a good opportunity to learn you are in control of your back. When spasms occur, lie down on your back with your knees bent and with your feet flat on the bed.



Tighten up your abdomen and try to lift one foot ever so slightly off the bed. You can tell whether you have tightened your abdomen by poking your fingers into your sides while lying on the bed. Start by relaxing your abdomen and poke your fingers in. Tighten your abdomen and poke again. Feel the difference? Make sure you are not sucking your abdomen in but rather just tightening the muscles.

Try lifting one foot again while tightening your abdomen. Is there more pain? Less pain? Now fine tune the arch in your back by making it larger or flatter. Try to find the most comfortable positions.

Your pain and spasms can often diminish by tightening your abdomen, readjusting the arch in your back, and slowly lifting one leg and then the other leg. If the pain and spasms continue, try the following position instead. You may want to do this for a day or two before starting any exercises. Lie down on your back with your

feet up on a leg wedge, pillows, stool or chair.



Place an ice pack on your lower back to help let things calm down. A leg wedge is available from Amazon at the link in the description of the video.



The recipe for an ice pack is as follows:

2 large freezer bags

1 cup rubbing alcohol

4 cups of water

Mix rubbing alcohol and water in a freezer bag. Remove the air from the bag and zip it up. Put that bag into the second bag and remove the air from the second bag and zip it up. Put this in the freezer overnight. Your ice pack should be nearly frozen but still bendable. Re-freeze as often as needed or until the bag leaks.

*Windshield Wipers: An Alternative Exercise for Back Spasms or Severe Pain*

This exercise is done to help relax muscles and get some movement in the spine and hips. For this exercise, lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the bed. Gently rotate your knees back and forth. If the movement hurts to perform in one direction (e.g., to the right) avoid rotating to that side and just rotate to the left side. Perform 10 times.



**As with all recommended exercises, the WINDSHIELD WIPERS must be PAIN-FREE! If not pain-free, they are not to be done.**