

Facet Joint (Facetogenic) Back Pain

Home Exercise Program

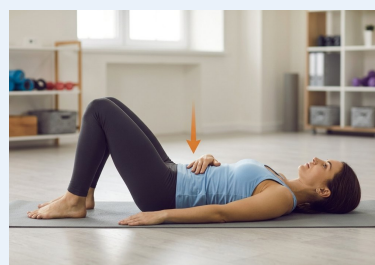
The facet joints are the small, paired joints at the back of each spinal segment. Facetogenic pain is typically a deep, aching low-back pain that is worse with standing, leaning backward, and twisting, and is eased by sitting or bending forward.

This program uses **gentle flexion (forward bending)** and **core-stabilizing exercises** that unload the facet joints, restore mobility, and build trunk support to protect them. Move slowly and stay within a comfortable range.

How to use this program

- **Frequency:** once or twice daily, most days of the week.
- **Pace yourself** — mild muscle stretch is fine; sharp or radiating pain is not. Ease off if pain increases.
- **Warm up with** a few minutes of easy walking before stretching.
- Breathe normally; never hold your breath during a hold.

Your Exercises

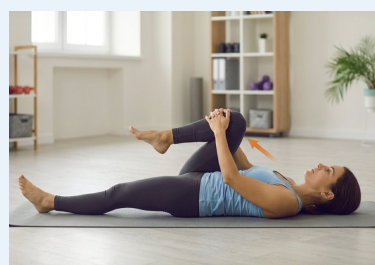


1. Posterior Pelvic Tilt

1. Lie on your back with knees bent, feet flat.
2. Gently flatten your lower back into the floor by tightening your abdominal and buttock muscles.
3. Hold, then relax.

Sets: 1–2 **Reps:** 10 **Hold:** 5 sec **Frequency:** Daily

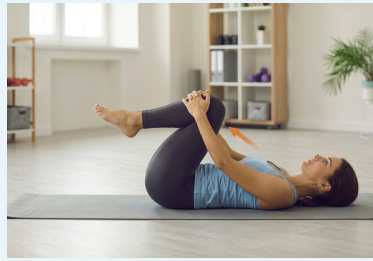
Tip: *Imagine pulling your belly button down toward the floor.*



2. Single Knee-to-Chest

1. Lie on your back with one leg extended.
2. Draw the other knee toward your chest using both hands.
3. Hold the gentle stretch, then lower and switch sides.

Sets: 2 **Reps:** 5 each leg **Hold:** 15–20 sec **Frequency:** 1–2× daily

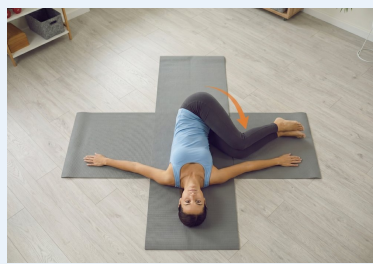


3. Double Knee-to-Chest

1. Lie on your back and bring both knees toward your chest.
2. Clasp your hands behind your thighs and gently hug the knees in.
3. Hold, feeling a stretch across the low back, then release.

Sets: 2 **Reps:** 5 **Hold:** 15–20 sec **Frequency:** 1–2× daily

Tip: This opens the facet joints and usually feels relieving.



4. Lower Trunk Rotation (Knee Rolls)

1. Lie on your back, knees bent and together, arms out to the sides.
2. Keeping shoulders flat, slowly let both knees roll to one side.
3. Return to center and roll to the other side.

Sets: 1–2 **Reps:** 8 each side **Hold:** 3 sec **Frequency:** Daily



5. Cat–Camel

1. On hands and knees, gently round your back upward like a cat.
2. Then slowly return to a flat, neutral spine.
3. Move smoothly; emphasize the rounding (flexion) phase.

Sets: 1–2 **Reps:** 10 **Hold:** 2–3 sec **Frequency:** Daily

Tip: Let the movement be pain-free and rhythmic.



6. Abdominal Bracing / Dead Bug

1. Lie on your back, knees bent, low back gently flattened.
2. Tighten your core, then slowly lower the opposite arm and leg.
3. Return and repeat on the other side without arching your back.

Sets: 2 **Reps:** 8 each side **Hold:** 3 sec **Frequency:** Daily

Tip: Keep the low back still — the core does the work.



7. Seated Forward Flexion Stretch

1. Sit on a firm chair, feet flat.
2. Slowly bend forward, letting your hands slide toward the floor.
3. Hold the comfortable stretch and rise slowly.

Sets: 1–2 **Reps:** 5 **Hold:** 15–20 sec **Frequency:** As needed

Tip: A good option for relief during the workday.

⚠️ Precautions — things to avoid

- Repeated or prolonged backward bending (extension) and overhead reaching.
- Twisting under load and sustained standing for long periods.
- Any movement that sends pain down the leg or sharply increases back pain.

Call the clinic / seek care if you have

- New numbness, weakness, or pain shooting down the leg.
- Loss of bladder or bowel control, or numbness in the groin/saddle area (seek emergency care).
- Pain that steadily worsens despite rest and these exercises.

Evidence & Sources

1. AAOS OrthoInfo — Patient education on back pain and spine conditioning. <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org>
2. North American Spine Society (NASS) — Evidence-based clinical guideline for the diagnosis and treatment of low back pain. <https://www.spine.org>
3. Lumbar stabilization exercise for suspected facet-joint low back pain (PMC7526062). <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7526062/>
4. Lumbosacral Facet Syndrome — StatPearls, NCBI Bookshelf. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK441906/>