

# Pathways to a Centered Body

## Article Two

## Constructive Rest for Bendy Backs



By Donna Farhi

### Benefits

- Puts the body in an optimal position to release the psoas and spine.
- Alleviates compression in the lumbar spine and can release pressure in the sacroiliac joint.
- Calms the body, mind, and emotions while also promoting a sense of relaxed alertness.

### Contraindications

- May be problematic for those with compromised disk integrity in the lower back.
- May be uncomfortable for those with inflammation in the sacroiliac joints or the lower back; try placing a folded soft towel, sheepskin rug, or a foam cushion under the pelvis.

### You'll Need

- A yoga mat covered with a wool or cotton blanket.
- An additional 1-2 blankets.
- 1-2 yoga bolsters (and a wall for support).



## Constructive Rest for Bendy Backs

Many people suffer from an accentuated curvature in the lumbar spine, sometimes referred to as hyperlordosis. The transition between the lumbar spine and pelvis can be abrupt, causing compression, pain, and even numbness and tingling down the legs. These two variations on the basic practice of Constructive Rest Position can help you to release and lengthen your spine and even help to reduce your lumbar curvature while simultaneously enjoying the benefits of iRest<sup>®</sup>.

### How

Assume the basic **Constructive Rest Position** by lying on your back with your lower legs bent, feet firmly placed on a yoga mat. For some people with an increased lumbar curve (hyperlordosis), it can feel more comfortable to raise the pelvis on a folded blanket (Figure 1). You may need only a folded towel, one blanket, or two. Use as much propping as is necessary to give effective relief, and as little as is possible.

Fig. 1



Alternatively, you can place a bolster against a wall and rest the balls of your feet on the bolster with the heels on the floor and the feet flexed at a 45-degree angle (Figure 2). The supported flexion of the feet helps to shift the femur deeper into the hip socket,

Fig. 2



making it easier to release the spine. You are not trying to flatten your lumbar curve or to press the back flat to the ground. Your aim is only to reduce the curvature (if it is accentuated) and restore the lumbar spine to a neutral position. If you are practicing iRest for longer than 15 minutes, you may want to place a second bolster under your knees, while still having your feet flexed against the bolster against the wall. The gentle compression of having the feet in contact with a firm surface helps to move the attention back to the center of the body. This can be very comforting for people who are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, or for whom an “opened out” relaxation position leaves them feeling vulnerable.

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Extracted from ***Pathways to a Centered Body: Gentle Yoga Therapy for Core Stability, Healing Back Pain, and Moving with Ease***, by Donna Farhi and Leila Stuart. As an iRest<sup>®</sup> subscriber you can receive a **50% discount on a digital copy of this book when you buy a hard copy** from: [www.embodiedwisdom.pub/pcb-ir](http://www.embodiedwisdom.pub/pcb-ir) (Please feel free to make copies of this pdf for your students or clients.)