

# All About the Spinal Galant Reflex

The **Spinal Galant Reflex** is a primitive reflex present at birth. It is triggered by gentle stimulation along the lower back, to the side of the spine. When activated, the baby responds with a side-bending motion of the hips toward the stimulus.

This reflex is important in early development for:

- Assisting in the birthing process
- Stimulating movement of the hips and lower body
- Supporting the development of trunk rotation
- Enhancing awareness of the lower back and body midline

## When Should the Spinal Galant Reflex Integrate?

The Spinal Galant reflex typically integrates by 6 to 9 months of age. By this time, the child should no longer react automatically to back stimulation and should begin to demonstrate more voluntary control of the trunk and pelvis.

If retained beyond this stage, it can interfere with posture, coordination, and even bladder control.

## Why Does the Spinal Galant Reflex Exist?

This reflex helps:

- Facilitate hip movement during birth
- Prepare the body for crawling and trunk rotation
- Stimulate the vestibular and spinal systems
- Promote awareness of one's midline and body sides

Once integrated, the child can maintain upright posture, sit comfortably, and control pelvic movement without involuntary side flexion.

## Signs of a Retained Spinal Galant Reflex

Children with a retained Spinal Galant Reflex may display:

- Excessive fidgeting or squirming when seated
- Difficulty sitting still at school or during meals
- Hypersensitivity to clothing touching the lower back or waist
- Bedwetting beyond typical developmental stages
- Postural asymmetry or leaning to one side
- Challenges with core stability and midline awareness

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## Parent Education: Why It Matters

If this reflex remains active, even light stimulation (like a waistband, a seat back, or touch) may cause discomfort or trigger automatic movement. This can lead to:

- Restlessness and difficulty focusing in seated tasks
- Challenges with bladder awareness and control
- Irritation with tight clothing or sensory overload

Gentle, rhythmic movement activities can help desensitize this area, support reflex integration, and improve a child's ability to sit comfortably and focus.

## 5 Simple Spinal Galant Integration Exercises for Home

These calming movements focus on trunk awareness, core control, and body symmetry. Repeat 3–5 times per week.

### 1. Slow Side Rolls

- Lay child on their back on a mat or blanket.
- Slowly roll them from side to side in a rhythmic, predictable pattern.
- Pause at each side for a moment.

### 2. Bridge Lifts

- Lie on back, knees bent, feet flat.
- Lift hips toward the sky, then lower with control.
- Focus on even weight distribution across the back.

### 3. Snow Angels on the Floor

- Lay on back, arms and legs outstretched.
- Slowly move limbs in and out like making snow angels.
- Keep head centered and back flat on the surface.

### 4. Tummy Scooter Pulls

- Lie on belly on a scooter board.
- Pull forward using arms, keeping legs extended behind.

### 5. Side Stretch Seated Reach

- Sit cross-legged.
- Reach one arm over the head to the opposite side.
- Hold for a few seconds, then return to center.

These exercises help normalize touch sensitivity, improve midline awareness, and support trunk control and postural stability. By introducing safe, rhythmic movement and repeated sensory input to the lower back and trunk, these activities gently reduce the hypersensitive response often seen with a retained Spinal Galant reflex. They help the nervous system learn to tolerate touch and movement in the lower back region, decrease automatic hip reactions, and encourage symmetrical postural responses. As core control and body



awareness develop, children become more capable of sitting still, maintaining upright posture, and responding to physical sensations with greater comfort and control.



## 5 Playful Ways to Integrate Spinal Galant Reflex Support

These activities allow for movement and rotation in a relaxed, natural way:

### 1. Tunnel Crawls

Encourage crawling through a tunnel or under low tables. The friction on the back provides desensitizing input.

### 2. Rolling Blanket Game

Wrap your child in a blanket and slowly roll them side to side, adding a silly “rolling burrito” story.

### 3. Animal Walks with Wiggles

Crawl or walk like snakes, lizards, or otters—wiggling the hips from side to side.

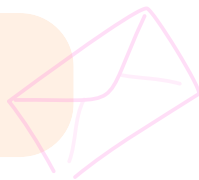
### 4. Swinging on Tummy

Use a platform or bolster swing. Let them lie prone and gently swing side to side while supporting their torso.

### 5. Back Drawing with Finger Traces

Use your finger to draw shapes, letters, or trails on your child’s back. Let them guess or simply enjoy the touch.

## Rhythmic Reflex Play for the Spinal Galant Reflex (For young or low-attention children)



### 1. Back-and-Forth Blanket Rock

What to do:

- Wrap your child loosely in a soft blanket.
- Gently rock them from side to side or forward and back while lying on your lap or the floor.

Why it helps:

- Provides calming vestibular input and gentle stimulation to the back.
- Reduces over-reactivity to light touch on the lower back.
- Mimics reflex movement in a safe, regulated setting.

### 2. Hip Wiggle Tunnel Game

What to do:

- Encourage your child to crawl through a tunnel or under a sheet.
- As they crawl, support slow hip wiggles or guide gentle back movement.





Why it helps:

- Promotes natural trunk rotation and desensitization of the back area.
- Allows movement repetition in a playful, exploratory way.

### 3. Swing and Sway on Belly

What to do:

- Lay your child tummy-down on a swing or your lap.
- Slowly sway them side to side or in small circles while supporting their trunk.

Why it helps:

- Offers deep pressure and vestibular stimulation while calming the nervous system.
- Supports midline orientation and core control through rhythmic repetition.

Supporting Spinal Galant integration means helping your child feel more comfortable in their own body. With gentle play and rhythmic repetition, you can reduce hypersensitivity and improve focus, posture, and toileting skills.

