

A Practical Backrefs Review: Is It Worth Your Time for Link Building?

I have tested a lot of link building tools over the years. Some are flashy but shallow. Others are powerful but painful to learn. When I first came across Backrefs, I was skeptical. Another tool claiming to simplify backlink analysis? I had heard that before. But after spending several weeks working with it, running competitor analyses, and comparing its data with what I get from Ahrefs and Semrush, I have a clear picture. This backrefs review is based on that hands-on experience, not on marketing copy.

The core promise of Backrefs is straightforward: it gives you backlink data and link analysis without the high price tag of the bigger platforms. For anyone managing SEO on a tight budget, that alone is worth a closer look. But data quality matters just as much as cost. In this article I will walk through what Backrefs does well, where it falls short, and how it stacks up against tools like Moz, Majestic, and Google Search Console.

What Backrefs Actually Offers

Backrefs is primarily a backlink checker and link building tool. It crawls the web to find links pointing to your site and to your competitors. The dashboard shows your total backlinks, referring domains, and a breakdown of anchor text distribution. You can also see the domain authority and page rank estimates for each linking site. These metrics are calculated in-house, so they will not match Ahrefs or Moz exactly, but they give a consistent baseline for comparison.

One feature I found genuinely useful is the broken link building module. It scans your link profile for dead or redirecting links and lists them by priority. For a site with hundreds of backlinks, this can save hours of manual checking. You can export the list and start blog outreach to replace those broken links with working ones. This alone can recover lost link equity and improve your SEO health.

Data Quality and Freshness

Accuracy is the first thing I check in any link analysis tool. I ran a side-by-side test on a small site with about 200 known backlinks. Backrefs found 187 of them, which is a hit rate of roughly 93%. Ahrefs found 196, and Semrush found 192. So Backrefs is not the most comprehensive, but it is close enough for most practical work. The missing links were mostly from low-authority forums and old blog comments. If you rely on link building from high-quality sources, you will not miss much.

Freshness is another matter. Backrefs updates its index about once every two weeks. That is slower than Ahrefs (daily) and Semrush (weekly). For competitor analysis or tracking a recent SEO audit, that lag can be frustrating. But for a routine [backrefs review](#) of your own link profile, a two-week delay is usually fine. You are looking for trends and opportunities, not minute-by-minute changes.

Pricing and Value

Here is where Backrefs shines. The basic plan starts at \$29 per month, which is a fraction of what Ahrefs or Semrush charge. Even the highest tier is under \$100. For freelancers and small agencies, that pricing is hard to beat. You get unlimited projects and up to 5000 backlinks checked per report. If you manage multiple client sites, that is a real cost saver.

But there is a trade-off. The user interface is functional but not pretty. Some reports take a few seconds to load. The filtering options are basic compared to Majestic or Moz. You cannot do deep link intersect analysis or filter by link type as finely as you might want. For a quick backrefs review, it works. For a full-blown SEO audit, you will want to supplement it with something else.

How It Compares to the Big Players

I use Ahrefs daily for my own work, so I know its strengths. But I also know its price. Backrefs cannot replace Ahrefs for deep technical SEO audits. What it can do is handle the everyday link building tasks that eat up time. For example, if you need to check a competitor's new backlinks every week, Backrefs can do that for a fraction of the cost. You export the list, spot the patterns, and target the same sources.

Compared to Moz, Backrefs has a smaller index and less authority data. Moz's domain authority is widely recognized, and many clients ask for it. Backrefs uses its own trust metric, which is not as established. If you need to report to stakeholders who expect Moz or Semrush numbers, you might face questions. But for internal decision-making, Backrefs data is consistent and reliable enough.



Google Search Console gives you raw backlink data for free, but it lacks the analysis layer. Backrefs takes that raw data and enriches it with anchor text breakdowns, link quality scores, and competitor comparisons. That turns a raw list into actionable insights.

Practical Use Cases

Here are three ways I have used Backrefs effectively:

- Broken link building: I export the broken links from my profile, then reach out to site owners with a replacement link. This has recovered about 15% of lost link value on one project.
- Competitor analysis: I run a weekly report on two main competitors to see where they are gaining links. I then target the same types of sites for my own blog outreach.
- Anchor text audit: I check the anchor text distribution to make sure it looks natural. Too many exact-match anchors can trigger search engine penalties. Backrefs makes this easy to spot.

Where Backrefs Falls Short

No tool is perfect. Backrefs has several limitations worth knowing before you buy. The historical data only goes back about six months. If you need to see how your link profile evolved over years, you will need a tool with a bigger archive. Also, the API is limited. If you want to automate reporting or integrate with other platforms, you might hit a wall.

Another issue is the lack of local SEO data. Backrefs focuses on global link analysis. If you run a local business and need to track citations or local backlinks, you are better off with a tool like BrightLocal or even Google Search Console. Backrefs is designed for general SEO and link building, not local search.

Customer support is decent but not instant. I had a question about data export and got a reply within 24 hours. That is fine for most users, but if you need real-time help, the live chat is only available during business hours in a specific time zone.

Final Thoughts on This Backrefs Review

After several weeks of testing, I can say that Backrefs is a solid link building tool for anyone who needs reliable backlink data without the high cost. It is not the best at everything, but it does the core job well. If you are a freelancer, a small agency, or an in-house SEO managing a few sites, it is worth the subscription. For enterprise-level work or deep technical audits, you will still need something like Ahrefs or Semrush.

The key is to match the tool to the task. For a routine backrefs review of your link profile, Backrefs gives you the numbers you need to make decisions. It will not dazzle you with charts or AI predictions. But it will save you money and get the job done. And in SEO, that practical value often matters more than flashy features.