

Postnatal Exercises



BMC
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The below exercises are a useful guide for you to reshape your core after delivery. Since most new mothers suffer from muscle distention and some extent of pelvic trauma, exercising will help you re-strengthen your muscles, improve your circulation and prevent backaches, often experienced by new mothers.

Start by walking on the first day post-delivery, then gradually increase your activity day by day. During the first weeks, find a balance between rest and activity. Do not become overtired or engage in sudden and/or severe exertion; such as heavy lifting, straining, pulling, or pushing.

Strengthening your Pelvic Muscles

Kegel Exercises

Your pelvic floor, or the muscles base of your abdomen located between your legs, have been stretched increasingly during pregnancy and have weakened. If your post-natal exercises should boil down to only one, it should be this one: The Kegel exercises. And if you haven't started doing them, then start now. To locate your pelvic muscles, insert a finger into

the vagina, and try to squeeze the muscles surrounding it. Or you can practice stopping the flow of urine when urinating. Once you have located them, contract these muscles for 10-5 seconds, then relax, repeating 10-20 times. Do this at least three times a day. Kegels can be done in any location: in the car, office, or at home. Do them in different positions such as sitting, standing, or lying down, to work out the various parts of your muscles. You can start doing Kegels on day 1 post-delivery.



Strengthening Your Tummy Muscles

Throughout your pregnancy, your tummy muscles have separated due to the stretching of your belly, and this is normal, however they will not go back to their previous shape unless you work them out. Start doing the below exercises on a daily basis around 6 weeks after delivery, and after your pelvic muscles have strengthened (both Cesarean section or vaginal delivery).

Exercise 1:

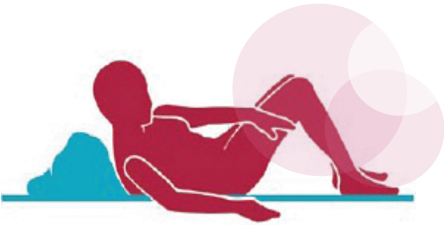
- Lie on the floor with a small pillow beneath your head.
- Bend up your knees, tilt your pelvis back and pull up your pelvic floor.
- Breathe out.
- Tighten your tummy, lift up your head.
- Reach both hands forward to touch your knees.
- Hold for a few seconds, lower

- slowly.
- Breathe in.
- Rest; then repeat 20 times.



Exercise 2:

- Breathe out.
- Tighten your tummy, lift up your head.
- Reach with one hand towards the opposite ankle.
- Hold for a few seconds, lower slowly.
- Breathe in.
- Rest then repeat 20 times.
- Repeat to the other side.

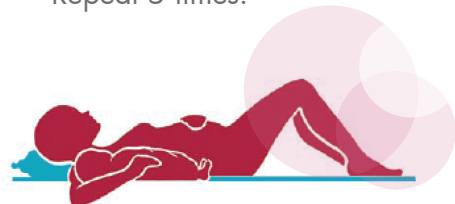


Improving Circulation

Circulation exercises help to reduce swollen ankles and varicose veins; a frequent complaint of new mothers. Below are 2 exercises that help increase your circulation, and which you can start performing few days after delivery:

Deep breathing

- Lie on your bed with your knees bent, and a pillow behind your head.
- Breathe in deeply through your nose. Sigh out.
- Repeat 5 times.



Breathing exercises help to improve your circulation.

Foot and ankle exercises

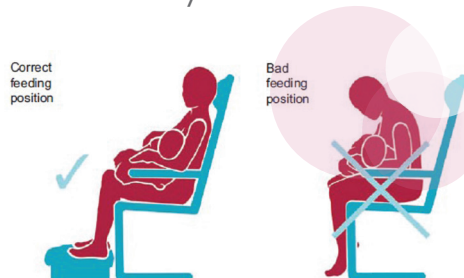
- Bend and stretch your ankles vigorously up and down for 30 seconds.
- Circle both feet 10 times in each direction.



Preventing Back Pain

You may still have some back pain after delivery, either extending from a pregnancy back pain, or from your weakened muscles due to the stretching, or from incorrect breast-feeding posture. Normally, walking and doing the above exercises will help relieve it.

To improve your feeding position, select a comfortable armchair which supports the middle of your back - you could put a rolled-up towel behind your waist. The back of the chair should be tall enough to support your head. Put a small stool beneath your feet.

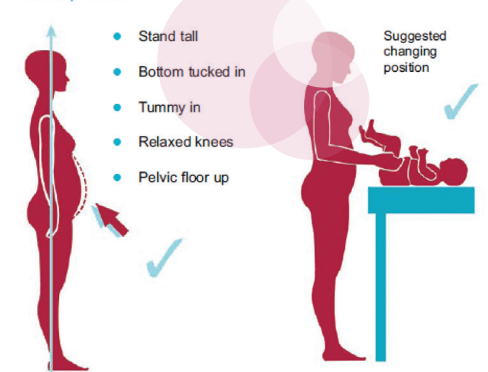


Other Back Pain Prevention Tips:

- Keep a good, straight upright posture whether sitting, standing, or changing baby's diapers.
- During house activities such as cleaning, mopping or other, bend your knees, keep your back straight and avoid twisting or bending it.

- Lower the crib sides when lifting your baby out of his / her crib.

Good posture



Finally, if you have developed a chronic incapacity, such as urine incontinence, prolapse, muscle weakness from a severe tear/an assisted birth with forceps, or your abdomen muscles are still more than 3 fingers apart even after 8 weeks post-delivery, please consult with your doctor, or with a physiotherapist.

For any further information or questions, contact us at:

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