

# Postnatal Exercises

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These exercises help to firm the muscles which were stretched while you were pregnant

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- **START...** by repeating each exercise x 5 and repeat 2-3 times each day. Increase the number of times you are able.
- **BREATHE...** comfortably. **DO NOT** hold your breath.
- **AFTER...** 6 weeks you should be ready to get back into any other sports or activities you enjoy.
- **STOP...** if you have any discomfort and check your activity with your doctor, midwife, nurse or physiotherapist.

## 1. PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES – KEGEL'S EXERCISES

These muscles support the bladder, uterus, and bowel. Pull up and **TIGHTEN** inside as if to stop yourself from passing urine (but don't do when you **ARE** passing urine) **HOLD** for up to 10 seconds and then relax. Repeat 25 times daily. Anywhere, anytime!!! **CONTINUE FOR A LIFETIME.**

## 2. LOWER BACK AND PELVIS – THE PELVIC TILT

This exercise can help correct posture and ease backache. Stand tall! Good posture is a habit. While lying or standing, pull in your tummy, flatten the curve in your lower back. **HOLD...** then release and feel the curve return. Repeat 5-15 times daily.

## 3. ABDOMINAL MUSCLES

**IF YOU FEEL A GAP BETWEEN THE EDGES OF THE ABDOMINAL MUSCLES, CHECK WITH THE MIDWIFE BEFORE DOING THESE EXERCISES.** Sitting, put your hands on your tummy and breathe in deeply, as you breathe out, hold your tummy muscles in for 5-10 seconds. Try this when you stand or sit. Repeat starting with 5 and increase as you are able.

## 4. BACK CARE

Take care when you lift, tightening your tummy muscles.

**DO NOT** bend from the waist to lift heavy objects. Bend your knees and keep your back straight. Keep your loads light and carry any weight close to your body.

**CAESAREAN – DO NOT LIFT** anything heavier than the baby in the car seat for the first 6 weeks.

## 5. RELAXATION

Make time to relax **EVERY DAY** using any of the techniques you are familiar with. Your body will recover more rapidly from the changes of your pregnancy and delivery of your baby as you do this.

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*REMEMBER – THE FIRST WEEK IS THE LYING IN PERIOD FOR A REASON... LAY AROUND, TAKE CARE, FEED YOUR BABY, AND LET YOUR BODY HEAL.*