



مؤسسة الرعاية الصحية الأولية
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CORPORATION

POSTPARTUM EXERCISE





Physical activity can be resumed as soon as you are physically and medically safe. This will certainly vary from one woman to another and will depend on the mode of delivery.

Women who have had a Caesarean delivery are advised to wait 6 to 8 weeks before resuming physical activity, especially advanced abdominal exercises and squats. The 6-week postpartum check is an opportunity for your health to be evaluated by a health care professional.

Nursing women should consider feeding their infants before exercising in order to avoid the discomfort of engorged breasts.

TYPES OF EXERCISE AFTER BIRTH



**PLEASE TAKE
MEDICAL ADVICE
BEFORE STARTING ANY
EXERCISE**

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES OR KEGEL EXERCISES:



This can be done immediately after birth.

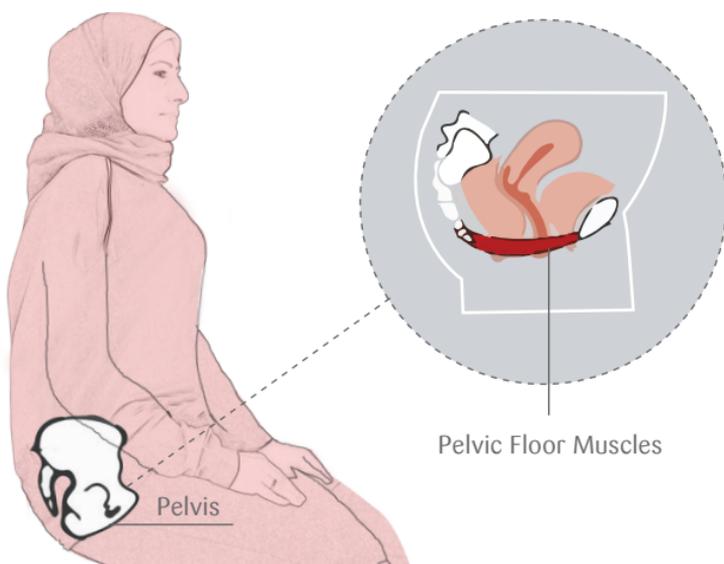
The pelvic floor muscles are a group of muscles that wrap around the underside of the bladder and rectum.

Childbirth can weaken your pelvic floor muscles and cause stress incontinence later in your life.

This exercise can be performed while you are lying down, sitting or standing.

Technique

- **Tighten** your pelvic floor muscles, as if you are trying to stop the flow of urine. Do not hold your breath or tighten your stomach or buttock muscle at the same time.
- **Hold** and keep tightening the muscles for 8 to 10 seconds.
- Then **Relax** the muscles completely for 5 seconds.
- **Repeat** 10 - 12 times per session, 3 times each day.



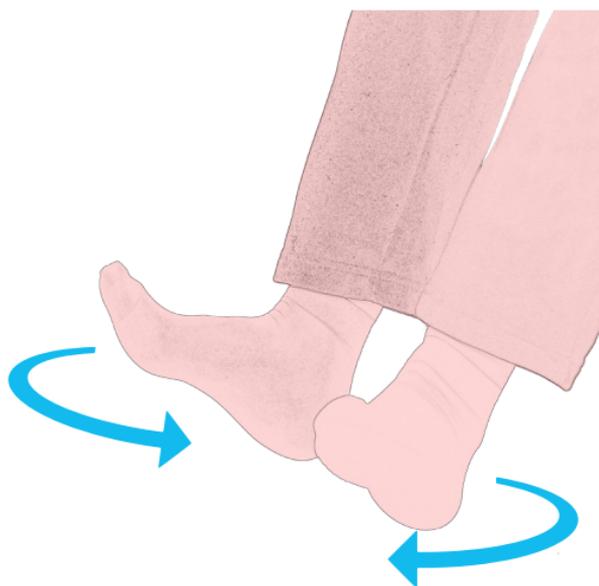
ANKLE CIRCLES EXERCISE (TO ENHANCE CIRCULATION)



This can be done immediately after birth.

Technique

- Rotate your ankles 10 times clockwise and counter-clockwise.
- Do the ankle rotations in different positions such as sitting, lying down etc. Repeat circular pattern 3 to 5 times.



NECK STRETCHES



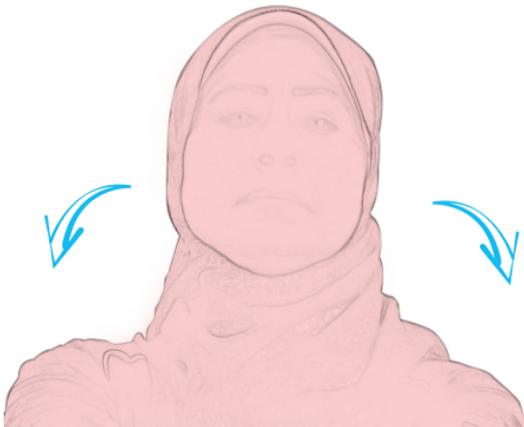
This can be performed 1 day after birth.

Breastfeeding and baby holding can really make your neck stiff. This exercise will stretch and strengthen your neck.

Technique

- Sit and slowly drop your neck forward and let the weight of your head pull your neck and stretch it.
- Hold in this position for 5-10 seconds.
- Lift your head and drop your right ear to your right shoulder gently.
- Let it rest there for 5-10 seconds.
- Move your left ear down to your left shoulder gently.
- Let it rest there for 5 - 10 seconds.
- Return to center, relax your head backwards, gazing upward and hold for 5-10 seconds.
- You can repeat this as often as you like.

Note: if you feel dizzy, do the exercise slower.



ARM & UPPER BACK STRETCH



This can be performed 2-7 days after birth.

Technique

- Raise your arms over your head keeping your elbows straight with your palms facing one another
- Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Lower your arms to your side, palms facing downward. Keep your upper back straight.
- Bring the backs of your hands together as far as possible behind your back and hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



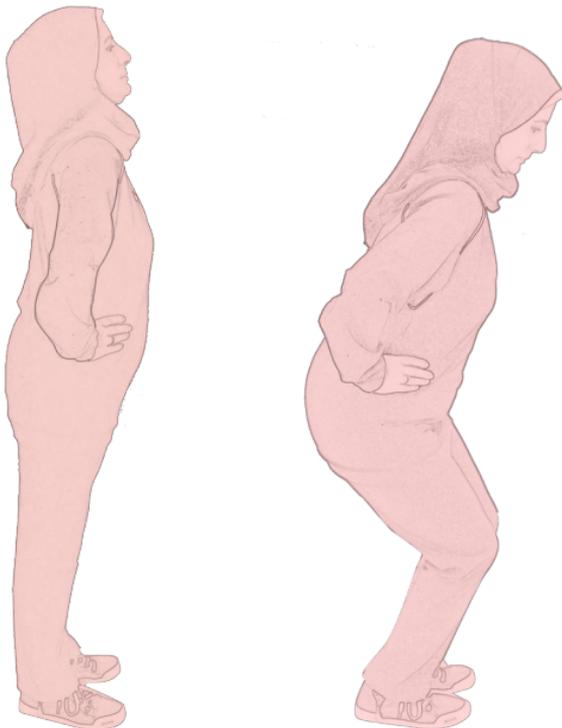
SQUAT



This can be performed 2 weeks after birth.

Technique

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Both feet should be facing forward.
- Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles and draw in your lower abdominal muscles.
- Keep your back straight and bend your knees as though you are sitting into a chair.
- Bend as far as it is comfortable to you.
- Slowly rise into an upright position.



ABDOMINAL STRENGTHENING EXERCISE

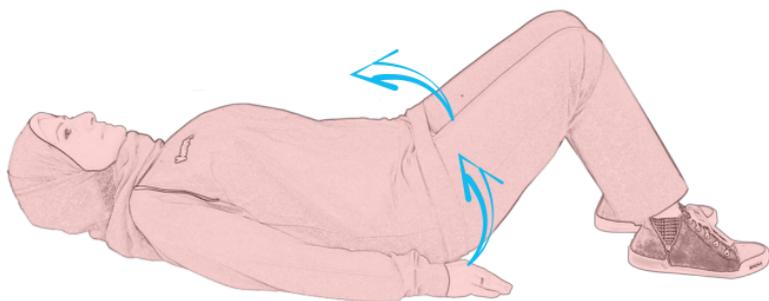
I. PELVIC TILT:



This can be done immediately after birth.

Technique

- Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent.
- Slowly tighten your abdomen and buttock muscles.
- Allow your pelvis to tilt upward. Don't forget to tighten the pelvic floor when doing pelvic tilts.
- Flatten your back against the floor as you inhale
- Hold for up to 10 seconds. Then relax and exhale.
- Repeat 5 times and work up to 10 to 20 repetitions.



ABDOMINAL STRENGTHENING EXERCISE

II. DEEP STOMACH EXERCISE



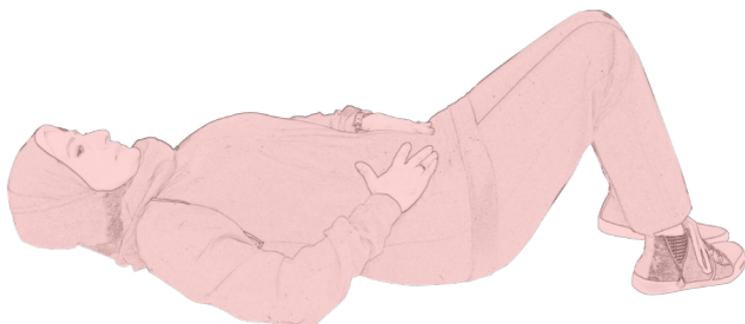
This can be performed 1 day after birth.

Deep abdominal breathing will help you regain the strength in your abdominal muscles and help you relax

Technique

- Lie down on a comfortable surface with your knees slightly bent.
- Relax your body as much as possible, allowing your weight to sink into the surface on which you are lying.
- Gently put your hands on your abdomen, close your eyes and begin to notice your breathing.
- Gently inhale and slowly, pull your belly button upwards. Hold for a count of 5.
- Gently exhale and slowly stretch your abdominal muscles downward to your spine. Hold for a count of 5.
- Keep breathing.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.

Note: This exercise can also be practiced whilst sitting, standing, side lying and lying down.



ABDOMINAL STRENGTHENING EXERCISE

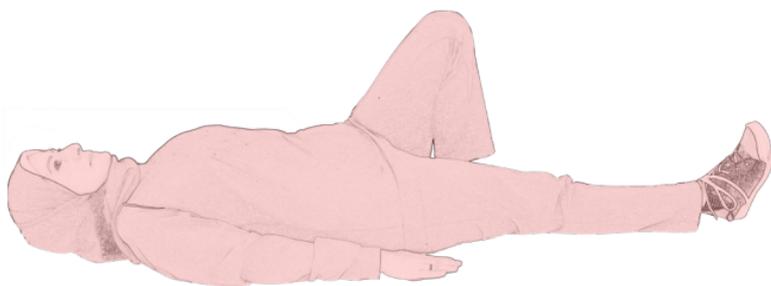
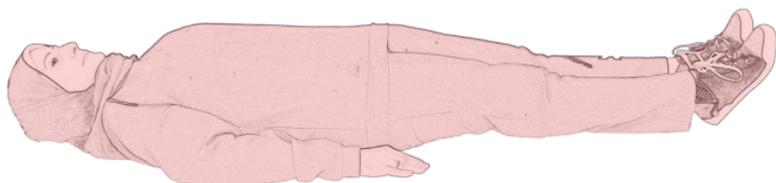
III. LEG SLIDING EXERCISE



This can be performed 2-7 day after birth.

Technique

- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Do the pelvic tilt.
- Keep your back flat while sliding one heel up and down the bed.
- Work only within the range where you can keep your back flat and touching the ground.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times with each leg.



MORE ADVANCED ABDOMINAL EXERCISES

Before doing more advanced abdominal exercises, it is important to check for extensive separation of the abdominal muscles. The abdominal muscle is divided by a seam; the muscle is really two halves that can often separate due to the size of the baby and the birth process.

How to Check for Abdominal Muscle Separation?

1. Lie on your back and bend your knees, the soles of your feet flat on the floor.
2. Place one hand behind your head and the other hand on your abdomen, with your fingertips across your midline at the level of your belly button.
3. Slowly put your chin to your chest and raise your head and shoulders until your neck is six to eight inches off the floor.
4. With the other hand, check for a gap or a bulge in the middle of your abdomen. There may just be a soft region between the muscles.

Note: If there is a gap wider than the width of two to three fingers, please seek medical advice before beginning any advance program.



ADVANCED ABDOMINAL EXERCISE

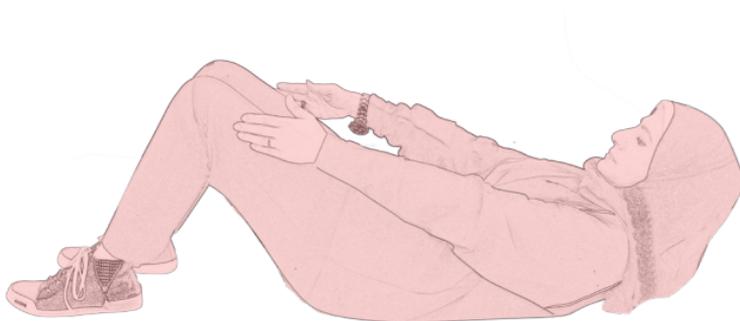
A. STRAIGHT CURL-UP



This can be performed after first week from birth

Technique

- Lie on your back with your knees bent. Breathe in slowly through your nose.
- Tuck in your chin and raise your head; point your hands toward your knees.
- Exhale and lift your shoulders off the floor for a count of five.
- Inhale and slowly lower your body to a count of five.
- Relax. Repeat 3 to 5 times.



Please take medical advice
before starting this exercise

ADVANCED ABDOMINAL EXERCISE

B. DIAGONAL SIT - UP (Waistline exercise)



This can be performed after first week from birth

Technique

- Lie on your back with your Left knee bent and Right leg straight.
- Exhale as you raise your head and right shoulder.
- Point your right hand toward your left knee, keeping your heels on the floor and hold for a count of five.
- Lower your head slowly for a count of five while breathing in through your nose. Repeat using your other side, pointing your left hand toward your right knee.
- Repeat the exercise using right knee bent and left leg straight



Please take medical advice
before starting this exercise



OTHER EXERCISES

AEROBIC ACTIVITY

Gentle aerobic activity such as walking can begin as soon as you are able to tolerate it, approximately a week after birth.

Vigorous aerobic activity can usually be resumed after your 6-week postpartum check-up. Consult your health care provider before resuming.

Warning signs to slow down or stop the exercise

Don't over exert yourself. Your body gives out warning signs if you are exercising too hard, and these signs may include:

- Increased fatigue
- Muscle aches and pains
- Colour changes to lochia (post-partum vaginal flow) to pink or red
- Heavier lochia flow
- Lochia starts flowing again after it had stopped.

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