



Returning to Exercise Postpartum

Take baby steps...

Start rebuilding your abs and pelvic floor soon after delivery. It's safe and very effective to incorporate belly breathing and kegels into your daily routine just days after you give birth.

Listen to your body...

After having a baby, it can be tempting to go overboard with exercise. Don't take on too much too soon. Ease back into exercise and pay close attention to what your body is telling you. Pain, bleeding, or urine leakage are all signs that your body is not ready for that activity.

Focus on your core...

When you're cleared to begin exercising, don't just jump on the elliptical and expect to see results. Exercises that work your core should be an integral part of your exercise program. Try the plank, it's one of the most effective exercises for your core. Don't get discouraged if you can only hold the position for a few seconds. Keep at it and as you build up your strength, you will be able to hold the position for longer and longer.

To make exercise more comfortable...

Breastfeed or pump before exercising. Make sure to wear a supportive sports bra and if one isn't enough, try two!

Workout smarter...

Time is valuable when you're a mom, so instead of spending hours at the gym, make your workouts more efficient and still effective. Intervals (short bursts of high intensity followed by lower intensity recovery) are a great option, as are exercises that work multiple muscle groups at once.

Fuel up for your workout...

To give your body the energy it needs to perform at its best during your workout, eat a healthy snack 1-2 hours before exercising. Some good options: nut butter on whole grain toast, fruit and string cheese, or ½ whole grain English muffin with hummus and a handful of berries.

Stay active throughout the day...

Incorporate exercise into your everyday activities and errands. Pick up the baby/toddler and start squatting, walk around while on a call at work, take the stairs, do bicep curls with the laundry detergent after you put the clothes in the washer.

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