

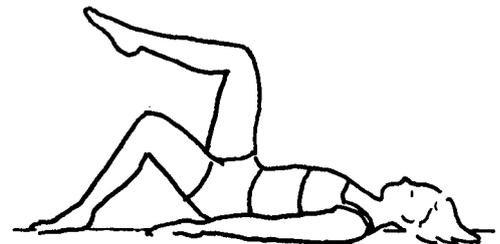
Progressing your exercises after birth

It is important that you are able to do your pelvic floor and core abdominal exercises before beginning these new exercises. Those muscles help to support your back. If you are unable to use those muscles when doing these new exercises you will put too much strain on your back. If you are unsure about any of these exercises, check with your physiotherapist before starting.

Exercises from 6 weeks after birth

1. Knee bends

- Starting lying down with your knees bent and your feet flat.
- Draw in your belly button towards your spine and hold it while bending one hip and knee up towards your chest as far as is comfortable.
- Hold up for the count of 10 and then slowly bring the leg down so the foot is resting back on the bed.
- Repeat this with the other leg, continuing to breathe throughout the exercise.

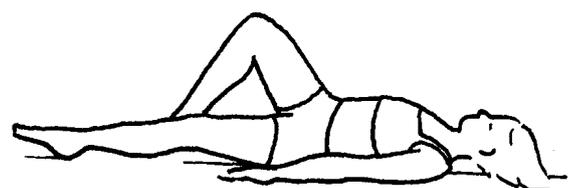


2. Knee fall outs

- Start lying down with your knees bent and your feet flat.
- Draw in your belly button towards your spine and hold it there.
- Slowly let one knee fall out to the side. Keep breathing and use your abdominal muscles to keep the opposite leg still.
- Slowly bring the knee back up, keeping the other leg still and continuing to breathe.
- Repeat this with the other leg making sure you keep your abdominal muscles drawn in to support you at all times.

3. One leg stretch

- Start lying down with your knees bent and your feet flat.
- Draw in your belly button towards your spine and hold.



- Slowly slide one leg out straight, continuing to breathe. Make sure you are not arching your back. Use your abdominals to support you while doing this exercise.
- Slowly slide the leg back to its original position, keeping the opposite leg still, continuing to breathe and keeping the abdominal muscles engaged. Repeat on the opposite side.

Exercises from 12 weeks after birth

4. Sit ups

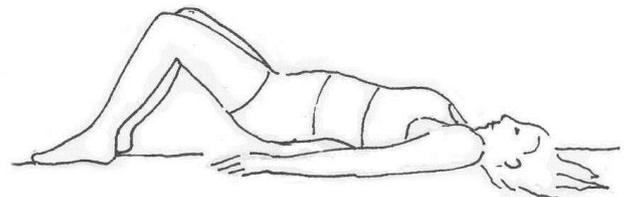
- Start lying down with your knees bent and your feet flat with two pillows supporting your head and your arms down by your side.
- Draw in your belly button towards your spine and hold it there.
- Reach your hands towards your ankles using your tummy muscles to bring your head off the ground. Hold the position for 2-4 seconds then slowly lower your head down and relax.
- Your abdomen should stay flat while you are doing this exercise and you should continue to breathe.
- To progress this exercise, remove one pillow and continue as above. You should not get any neck pain or abdominal bulging when doing this exercise. If you do, stop and review the exercise with your physiotherapist.

5. Cross abdominal sit ups

- Start lying down with your knees bent and your feet flat.
- Draw in your belly button towards your spine and hold it there.
- Reach your right hand towards your left knee using your tummy muscles and continuing to breathe.
- Lower back down and relax. Then repeat on the other side. To progress this exercise, try holding for 2-4 seconds then lower head down.

6. Bridging

- Start lying down with knees bent and feet flat.
- Draw your belly button in towards your spine and hold it there.
- Squeeze your bottom muscles and tuck your bottom under, slowly rolling up into the bridge position.
- Continue to breathe and then slowly roll back down, trying to move the spine segment by segment.
- To progress this exercise, hold in a bridge position for 2-4 seconds, but remember to use your abdominals to support you.



The above exercises should not be painful and should not create any doming or bulging in the abdominal area. If you have any concerns please ring 0118 322 7818 to speak to a maternity/women's health physio.

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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