



ADVANCED PELVIC PHYSIOTHERAPY  
CENTRE – TORONTO

### **Post-partum Exercise**

Exercise after having a baby has many benefits such as improved cardiovascular fitness, increased energy, improved psychosocial well-being and a facilitated weight loss. It is safe to exercise while you are breastfeeding.

#### **General Guidelines**

- ✓ Exercise slowly and smoothly: do not hold your breath
- ✓ Relax and breathe deeply between exercises
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids (exercise requires extra fluids and calories)
- ✓ Gradually increase the length, intensity and frequency of your exercise program
- ✓ Walking is a great addition to your exercise program
- ✓ Stop exercising if you feel pain, light-headedness, dizziness, and/or nausea
- ✓ If your vaginal flow returns to bright red bleeding or increases, stop exercising and take a slower pace next time

#### **Perineal Care**

- ✓ Peri-bottle- fill with warm water, spray at urethra during urination
- ✓ Frozen Pads (Padsicle) spray pad with witch hazel (alcohol free) or perineal spray (ex. Earth Mama) place in freezer – when ready to use, take out of the freezer to allow it to thaw for a few minutes, so it is not too cold. Place pad in your underwear or adult diaper if your flow is heavy. Change every few hours just like you would a regular sanitary pad.
- ✓ Sitz bath- 5-10 min 1x/day
- ✓ Take care of yourself -rest, eat, ask for help, drink plenty of water
- ✓ Use a donut shaped cushion when sitting for long periods, if comfortable and needed
- ✓ Bowel movements- place sanitary pad in palm, support the front of your perineum to allow relaxation of the rectum. Use a step stool to ensure your knees are higher than your hips while sitting on the toilet seat. Ensure adequate water and fibre to keep stool soft and easy to pass. Breathe softly and deeply and never strain to have a bowel movement



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Week 1-2

1. Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Place one hand on your belly and one at the side of your lower rib cage –take a slow breath in and feel the breath come into your hands, slowly exhale

2. Core breathing and pelvic floor muscle activation

- Inhale slowly and feel space being created into the pelvic floor (sitz bones moving away from each other)
- Exhale and engage your pelvic floor (sitz bones coming together) hold 1-2 seconds and repeat 10x. Perform this 1-2 x/ day. This should only be done if it is pain-free and you do not have a urinary catheter in situ. This should not be performed while sitting on the toilet.

3. Towel thoracic spine and pectoral stretch

- Place rolled towel down spine. Support head with another folded towel
- Bend elbows and hold position for one minute
- Repeat stretch with arms straight out





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Week 3-4

1. Bent knee fall out

- Lie on back in neutral spine with feet hip width apart
- With the core breath
- Drop one knee out (on the exhale)
- Return (on the inhale)
- Drop other knee out (exhale)
- Return
- Repeat x10



2. Gluteal stretch

- Lie on back
- Cross R foot over L knee hold on behind L thigh
- Hold 30 seconds
- Repeat x3 on each side



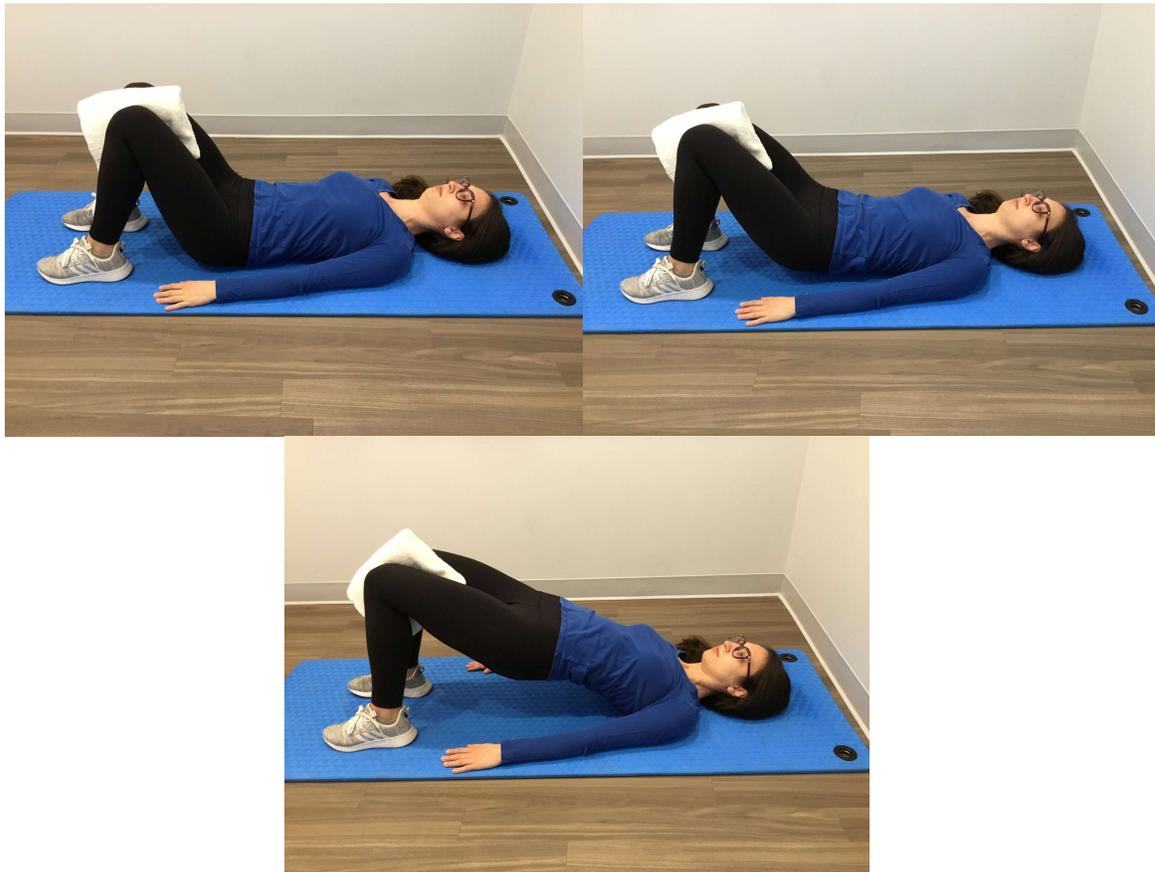


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Week 5-6

1. Bridging

- Lie on back in neutral spine, towel between knees, use your core breath
- Exhale as you lift pelvis and spine one vertebrae at a time off floor until trunk is in line with your thighs (inhale at top)
- Exhale as you return to starting position (inhale at bottom)
- Repeat x10



Week 6-8

Follow up with a Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist once cleared by your Gynecologist