

Core tips for a new māmā



Kia ora māmā and congratulations!
We are Pelvic Health Physiotherapists here
to support your pre- and postnatal needs.

the core
CENTRE

BREATHE

Lack of breath awareness may lead to pelvic floor muscle tension.

It's not uncommon for new māmās to want to hold their belly muscles in and chest-breathe. However chest breathing does not allow your diaphragm to move well and your pelvic floor muscles naturally follow what your diaphragm does.

Core exercise:

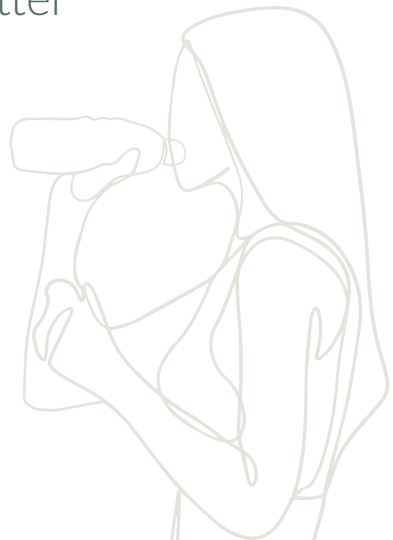
Diaphragmatic Breathing

Lying on your back in a relaxed position: think about the rib cage expanding 360 degrees on the breath in and relaxing back to resting state on the breath out x 10min per day.

HYDRATION

It's ultra important for breast-feeding māmās and any māmās for that matter to stay well hydrated!

How much you may ask? It's on an individual basis. The correct amount should be when your urine is a pale yellow to a clear colour and your bowel motions soft and easy to pass.



POOS GLORIOUS POOS

Bowel motions should be soft and easy to pass. Lots of fibre and good hydration should achieve this.

If they still feel 'stuck' please do not force, as it can place extra pressure on the pelvic floor and pelvic organs. The correct way to pass a bowel motion is with your feet on a stool, elbows relaxed forward onto the

knees, maintain the curve of your lower back and relax the stomach muscles and 'breathe the poo'.

Still stuck? Come and get an assessment!

ABDOMEN ASSESSMENT

It's common to feel a 'gap' down the midline after birth.

It's important to regain the tension across this gap to protect the abdominal content and organs underneath, and to support your spine! To check it, hold a hand on your tummy and try a little head lift; you should feel tension develop under

your hand. If you see your tummy 'pop up' like a tent, this is incorrect. Try breathing out next time you do it and see if it changes. **Still 'popping up'? See a qualified practitioner to gain the correct tension and support.**

CESAREAN SECTION DELIVERY

It will take 6 weeks for basic healing of the scar.

Over this time protect the scar by continuing to roll in bed and breathe out with large movements to decrease the intra-abdominal pressure.

After 6 weeks we recommend coming for an examination to learn scar

massage and how to use the abdominals in the right way – to protect you for the future and prior to having a second cesarean scar.

POSTURE

So many māmās are still stuck in ‘pregnancy town’ leaning back on their heels.

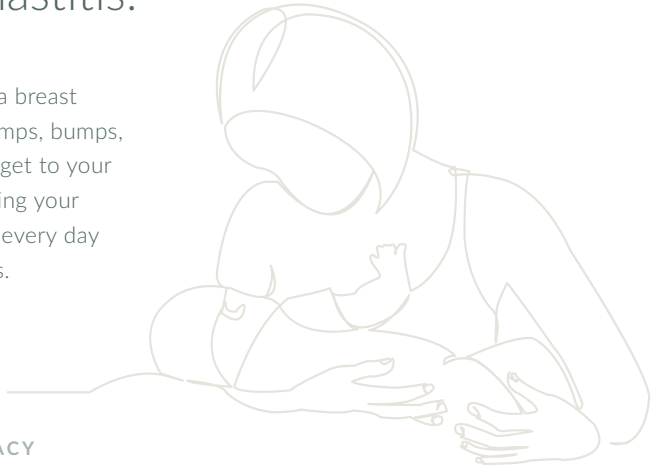
This puts added weight through the abdominals and the front of the pelvic floor. To correct postural positioning, use the breast trajectory as a cue; bring them straight ahead rather than up towards the roof and this will bring you into an upright posture.



BREAST CHECK

No one wants to put up with nasty mastitis!

To prevent this: perform a breast check daily looking for lumps, bumps, redness and pain. Please get to your GP if you notice this. Giving your breasts a loving massage every day can also help prevent this.



RETURNING TO INTIMACY

The hot question everyone wants to know...

There is no 'set' time frame and you'll benefit from asking your midwife if you've had stitches, but the basic healing time frame is 4-6 weeks, when your lochia has stopped and... when YOU feel ready!! It's important to be prepped for this event: good arousal, a partner that is willing to listen to your needs, good positioning, and lubricated with a water-based and glycerin free lubrication. The tissues of your vulva and vagina can become more sensitive postnatally, scar tissue

can be uncomfortable and pelvic floor muscle tension can contribute to pain with intercourse. Regular relaxed diaphragmatic breath practice can help, however please do not put up with pain with intercourse – see your GP or book in with a Pelvic Health Physiotherapist for a thorough examination. If there relationship challenges, pressure from your partner or previous sexual abuse or assault, you may need to seek care with counselor and pelvic health physio.

RETURN TO EXERCISE

If you have just seen a new māmā with a six-pack on Insta... put your phone down now!

We can guarantee that either this mum has damn glorious genetics and we can all be jealous together or she has unresolved issues going on within the pelvis that no one can see. This is the thing with pelvic health issues, no one can see it unless you've had an internal pelvic check.

Everyone's births, genetics, exhaustion levels, diet, stress levels and situations are different which is why your return to exercise needs to be altered accordingly. Within the first 4-6 weeks basic healing is occurring so just start with gentle walking and progress this with length of time and hills.

There should be no pain, heaviness or a feeling of your insides falling out. If this feels comfortable you can start to return to other exercise, but **we would recommend a check by a pelvic health physio before returning to high intensity or impact exercises such as jumping, running or netball.**





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