

# POST NATAL EXERCISES

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VOLUME I



JULY 2016

SAFE EXERCISES FOR:

0-3 WEEKS POST NATAL

.....  
3-8 WEEKS POST NATAL

.....  
8-12 WEEK POST NATAL

.....  
12-16 WEEKS POST NATAL



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**EACH EXERCISE SHOULD BE DONE AT YOUR OWN  
COMFORT LEVEL. YOU SHOULD FEEL NO PAIN  
OR DISCOMFORT WHILE DOING ANY  
OF THESE EXERCISES.**

# POST NATAL EXERCISES:



## 0-3 Weeks



### **SIDE LYING PELVIC FLOOR AND POST NATAL ABDOMINAL BRACING**

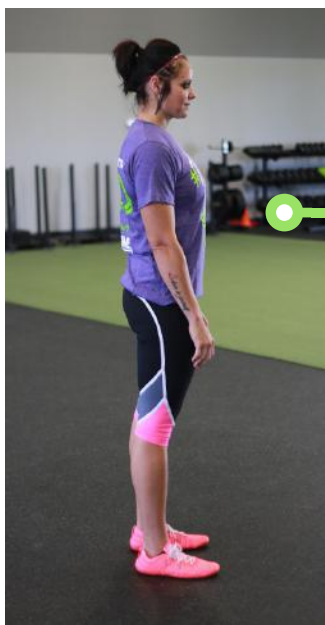
Lying on your side, focus on the inside lifting your pelvic floor muscles first and then draw in your lower abdominal muscles. Hold this for 1 - 2 seconds first while breathing easily and aim to build up by one second at a time until you can hold for 10 seconds, and can repeat 10 times with a 10 second rest between each one. This can sometimes take a few months



### **SITTING PELVIC FLOOR AND POST NATAL ABDOMINAL BRACING**

Start this exercise when you are comfortable sitting down. Sit tall and focus on your pelvic floor muscles. Lift slowly, hold them and relax. Check that you are still breathing normally while you do this. Work on this first.

When you can lift and hold your pelvic floor without holding your breath, then start to hold your pelvic floor for longer, starting with a 2 - 3 second hold and aiming to increase this by one second at a time until you can hold for 10 seconds. Build up to doing 10 in a row, with a 10 second rest in between each one.



### **STANDING POST NATAL ABDOMINAL BRACING**

Stand in front of a mirror with your feet facing forwards. Make the weight even on both feet. Check your position and stand tall. Lift your chest, face your head forward and gently draw in your lower abdominal muscles. Hold for 2 - 3 seconds if you can and relax slowly. Repeat 2 - 3 times and build up to longer holds, first aiming for 5 seconds, and then building up over time to a 10 second hold.

# POST NATAL EXERCISES:

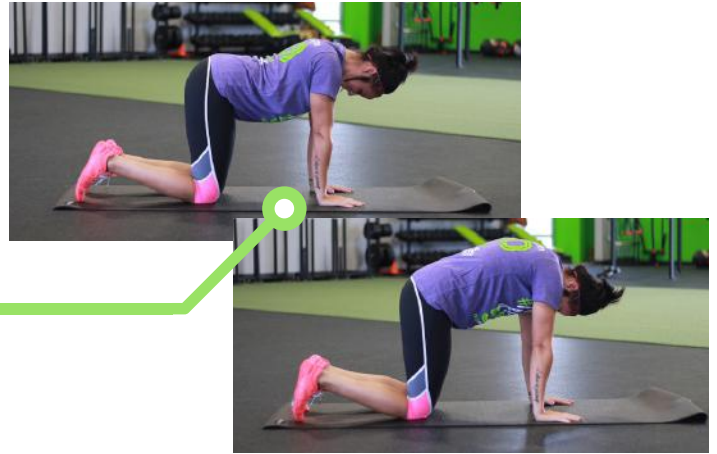


## 3-8 Weeks



### CAT/CAMEL

Start on your hands and knees. Hands directly under shoulders. Curl your back, arching like a cat. Relax. Repeat and hold for 3 - 10 seconds. Slowly release back to the start position. Change the position of your hands slightly, moving them forwards or backwards to feel the stretch in a different part of your back.



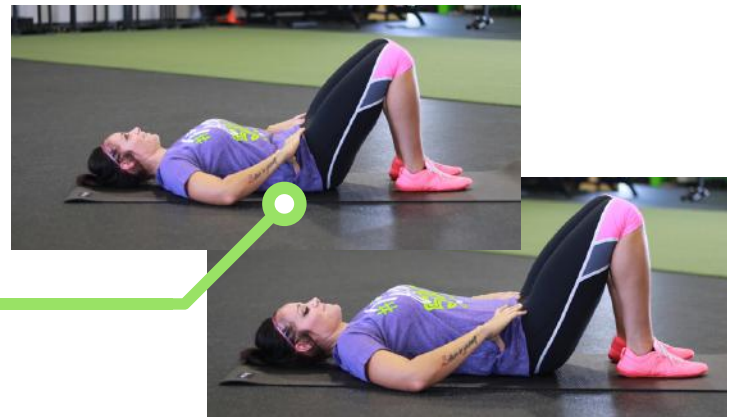
### QUADRUPED REACH-OUTS

Start on your hands and knees. Hands directly under shoulders. Draw in your pelvic floor and TVA. Keep your back and shoulder steady and reach forwards. Return to the starting position and then change sides. Build up to doing 10 on each side. Reset your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles each time before you start. Keep breathing easily - if you start to hold your breath, stop and have a rest.



### SUPINE PELVIC TILTS

Start with your knees bent, so your back feels comfortable. Slowly flatten your lower back onto the floor and then release. Focus on and feel your abdominal muscles working as you repeat this. Keep breathing easily. To focus further roll one part of your lower back onto the floor at a time. Hold, then release slowly. Precautions: No pelvic floor strain should be felt or bulging of your the abdominal muscles noticed.



### SITTING PELVIC CIRCLES

Sitting tall on a ball. Move your hips and pelvis slowly to one side. Keep control of the movement. Stop. Move back to the starting position. Repeat to the other side. When you are confident then start to form circles. Move your hips and pelvis and let the ball move. Add forming a figure eight with the ball. Change direction. Make sure that you don't hold your breath or over tighten your upper abdominal area. Relax back to the starting position to rest as needed.



# POST NATAL EXERCISES:

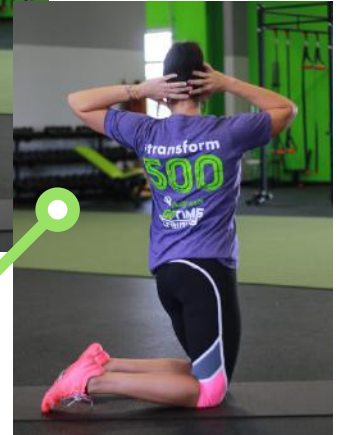
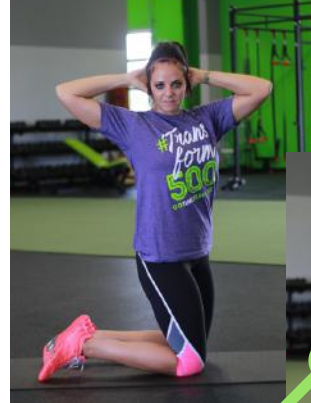


## 3-8 Weeks



### TALL KNEELING PRISONER ROTATIONS

Assume Kneeling position and interlock the hands lightly behind the head without pulling head forward. Engage core muscles to stabilize spine. Maintain contraction throughout exercises. Exhale and slowly rotate the arms to the right until point of resistance is reached. Avoid hip rotating. Hold for 2-3 seconds and relax. Build up to 10 repetitions each side as your pelvic floor and abdominal holds improve. Repeat to the other side.



### TALL KNEELING BAND RESISTED ANTI-ROTATIONS

Assume a kneeling position Attach band to door or permanent fixture. This should be about chest high and to the side of you. Focus first on lifting and holding your pelvic floor muscles up. Draw in your lower abdominal muscles and hold. Grab band with both hands. With arms straight out pulled band to middle of chest. Hold for 2-3 seconds and relax. Build up to 10 repetitions each side as your pelvic floor and abdominal holds improve. Repeat to the other side.



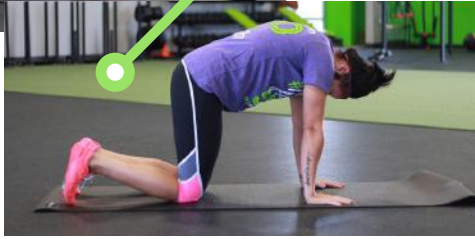
### BRIDGES

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Raise your hips of the floor so that your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Push through your heels and out through knees. Engage your core throughout. Pause at the top then slowly lower your body back to the floor. Repeat 8 - 12 times.



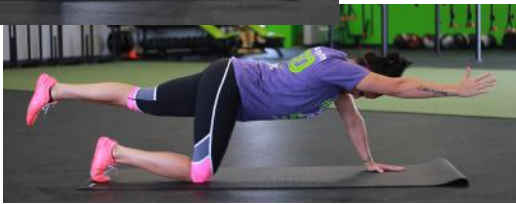
# POST NATAL EXERCISES:

## 6-12 Weeks



### CAT/CAMEL

Start on your hands and knees. hands directly under shoulders. Curl your back, arching like a cat. Relax. Repeat and hold for 3 - 10 seconds. Slowly release back to the start position. Change the position of your hands slightly, moving them forwards or backwards to feel the stretch in a different part of your back.



### BIRDDOG

Start on your hands and knees. Hands directly under shoulders. keeping your spine and neck in a neutral position; you should be looking at the floor Slowly extend your left leg behind you while reaching your right arm forward Keep your hips and shoulders square and make sure your lower back doesn't arch. Hold for five seconds. Slowly return to the starting position and do the move on the opposite side 10-12 repetitions.



### BALL WALL PUSH UP

A good way to start back with pushups, while protecting your pelvic floor and lower back is to use a ball against the wall. Place the ball in front of you with your hands at shoulder height. With your hands shoulder width apart, set your shoulder blades into position. Move your chest in towards the ball while breathing out. Hold for a moment. Breathe in. Breathe out as you push back out from the wall. Check to feel that there is no pressure downwards on your pelvic floor with each move. Repeat 4 - 6 times to start with good form. Build up to 8 - 12 repetitions.



### BALL WALL SQUATS

Place your feet no more than shoulder width apart (moving them closer together will protect your pelvic floor). Place the ball behind your back. Lift your pelvic floor and draw in your lower abdominal muscles. Hold them as you slowly squat down. Stop when you feel your pelvic floor and "core" control 'goes'. Push through your feet using your thighs to stand again. As your control improves with time, begin to lower down further. Do not hold your breath. Aim for 4 - 6 to start with and build up to 8 - 12 repetitions.



# POST NATAL EXERCISES:

## 6-12 Weeks



### T-SPINE ROTATION

With your hand on your forehead, roll your elbow back towards the floor. Hold for a few seconds and roll forwards. This exercise can either be done - rolling forwards and back 5 - 6 times OR rolling back and holding the stretch for 10 - 12 seconds, feeling your chest and shoulder open up.



### SUPINE KNEE HUGS

Lift your knees up to your chest and hold them to feel a comfortable stretch in your back. Hold for 15 - 20 seconds and relax. Repeat 4 - 5 time



### CHILD'S POSE

Begin on your hands and knees. Center your breath, and begin to let your thoughts slow down. Turn your awareness inward. Spread your knees wide apart while keeping your big toes touching. Rest your buttocks on your heels. Those with very tight hips can keep their knees and thighs together. Sit up straight and lengthen your spine up through the crown of your head. On an exhalation, bow forward, draping your torso between your thighs. Your heart and chest should rest between or on top of your thighs. Allow your forehead to come to the floor. Keep your arms long and extended, palms facing down. Press back slightly with your hands to keep your buttocks in contact with your heels. Lengthen from your hips to your armpits, and then extend even further through your fingertips. For deeper relaxation, bring your arms back to rest alongside your thighs with your palms facing up. Completely relax your elbows.



# POST NATAL EXERCISES:



## 12-16 Weeks



### BRIDGES

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Raise your hips off the floor so that your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Push through your heels and out through knees.

Engage your core throughout. Pause at the top then slowly lower your body back to the floor.. Build up to doing 2-3 sets of 8 - 15.. (Progression- try single leg 8-10 repetitions per leg)



### CLAM LIFTS

Lift your pelvic floor, draw in your lower abdominal muscles and hold. Keep breathing easily. Slowly lift your top knee up and out. Keep your feet together. Slowly lower down, then release your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles. Breathe easily, refocus and repeat each time accurately. Aim to build up to 8 - 10 reps each side. Stop if you feel any joint pain at the front (pubic bone) or back (sacral joints).



### SQUATS

With your feet no more than shoulder width apart, squat slowly down. Start with a small amount of knee bend first. Keep your back straight and check that you can still see your toes. First do 4 - 6 squats, march on the spot for 30 seconds and then repeat. Build up to doing 2-3 sets of 8 - 12 in a row with good form.



### LUNGE

Focus forwards keeping your hips aligned and level as you lunge. Begin with drawing in and up your pelvic floor and deep core. Start the lunge, keeping your knees pointing forwards. Lower down keeping focused on maintaining your core control. Keep good alignment. Push up through your legs. Repeat 6 - 12 times on each leg. With this exercise you can change legs each time, or do 6 - 12 on each leg and then repeat on the other side. The deep lunge is more challenging to your pelvic floor so go down only as far as you can with no pressure downwards on these muscles.





# POST NATAL EXERCISES:



## 12-16 Weeks



### PUSH-UP (MODIFIED PUSH-UP OR INCLINE PUSH-UP)

With hands underneath your shoulders, set your shoulder blades in position. Move your chest in towards the floor while breathing out. Hold for a moment. Breathe in. Breathe out as you push back up from the floor. If you feel there is any pressure on your pelvic floor muscles, move your feet in closer to your hands and continue with the breathing focus on the way down and up of this movement. 4 - 6 times to start with good form. Build up to doing 2-3 sets of 8 - 12 in a row with good form.



### BENT OVER DUMBBELL ROWS

With a dumbbell in each hand (palms facing your torso), bend your knees slightly and bring your torso forward. By bending at the waist; as you bend make sure to keep your back straight until it is almost parallel to the floor. Make sure that you keep the head up. The weights should hang directly in front of you as your arms hang perpendicular to the floor and your torso. This is your starting position. While keeping the torso stationary, lift the dumbbells to your side (as you breathe out), keeping the elbows close to the body (do not exert any force with the forearm other than holding the weights). On the top contracted position, squeeze the back muscles and hold for a second. Slowly lower the weight again to the starting position as you inhale. Repeat for 2- 3 sets of 8-15 repetitions.



### DUMBBELL BICEPS CURL

Stand up straight with a dumbbell in each hand at arm's length. Keep your elbows close to your torso and rotate the palms of your hands until they are facing forward. This will be your starting position. Now, keeping the upper arms stationary, exhale and curl the weights while contracting your biceps. Continue to raise the weights until your biceps are fully contracted and the dumbbells are at shoulder level. Hold the contracted position for a brief pause as you squeeze your biceps. Then, inhale and slowly begin to lower the dumbbells back to the starting position. Build up to doing 2-3 sets of 8 - 12 repetitions.



# POST NATAL EXERCISES:

## 12-16 Weeks



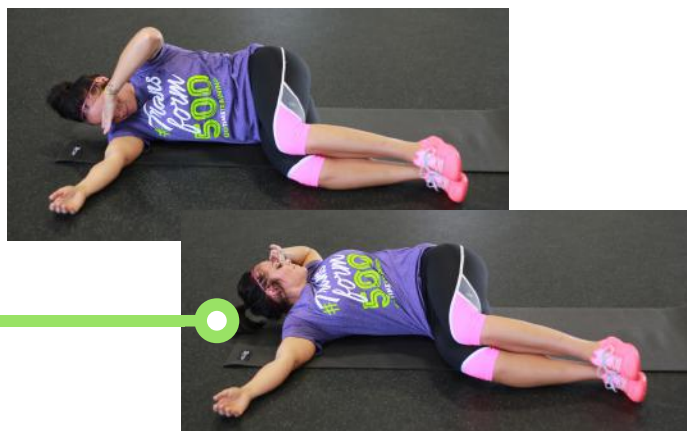
### SEATED BEHIND THE NECK TRICEPS EXTENSION

Sit on a chair or stability ball with a dumbbell in each hand. Engage the core. Extend your arms fully and raise the dumbbells overhead. Lower the dumbbells behind your head, bending at the elbows. Keep your elbows steady. Stop just shy of the dumbbell touching your neck. Pause for one second, and then extend your arms back to the starting position overhead. Build up to doing 2-3 sets of 8 - 12 repetitions.



### T-SPINE ROTATION

With your hand on your forehead, roll your elbow back towards the floor. Hold for a few seconds and roll forwards. This exercise can either be done - rolling forwards and back 5 - 6 times OR rolling back and holding the stretch for 10 - 12 seconds, feeling your chest and shoulder open up.



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**AFTER 16 WEEKS POST NATAL RETURN TO  
PREVIOUS ACTIVITY LEVELS PROVIDING THAT  
YOUR PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES  
ARE BACK TO NORMAL.**

**YOU SHOULD NOT EXPERIENCE ANY BACK  
PAIN, PELVIC FLOOR VAGINAL HEAVINESS OR  
URINE LOSS DURING OR AFTER EXERCISE.  
IF YOU DO, SLOW DOWN OR REDUCE  
YOUR INTENSITY LEVEL.**

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