

Exercise After Birth



Adequate rest and sleep are vital for the new mother. However, a new mother who doesn't get off her bed to walk around and get some exercise is more prone to circulatory problems such as varicose veins, oedema and thrombosis. It will also take longer for the uterus to return to its normal size, increasing the risk of uterine infection and heavy bleeding. Reduced mobility will increase the chance of constipation. At the end of pregnancy the abdominal muscles separate a little in the middle. Doing abdominal exercises will strengthen these muscles and aid recovery. Doing pelvic floor exercises will reduce problems like stress incontinence. Early mobilization and daily increasing the amount of exercise are therefore important.

When to start exercising after birth?

After a normal birth you can get off the bed and walk around the day of the birth of your baby. If you had a caesarean section, then wait until the next day. Make sure you get some exercise every day. The first day it might just be by walking up and down to the bathroom. Increase the amount of exercise each day.

The first few times that you get off the bed to walk around, you might feel weak and dizzy. Make sure that someone supports you. Sit down as soon as you don't feel well.

Exercises for the newly delivered mother

Apart from walking, it is good to do some other exercises to aid recovery. Below are some exercises you can do in the first days after the birth. Do each exercise five times, three times a day. Make sure you don't hold your breath while doing these exercises.

Day 1:

- Lie on your back, legs stretched out, lift up feet slightly and make a circling motion.
- Lie on your back, pull up your knees with your feet on the bed. Push your lower back into the bed. This usually happens when tightening your bottom muscles. Relax.
- Lie on your back, legs stretched out, push your knees towards the bed.
- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles as if you're trying to prevent a bowel movement or stop the flow of urine. Hold for two seconds and relax for two seconds. Repeat five times. Then try to hold longer, up to ten seconds. Continue to breathe!



Day 2: Do the same exercises as on day one and add the following

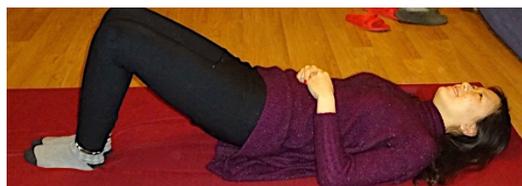
- Lie on your back, pull up your knees and then stretch them out again with your feet sliding on the bed.
- Lie on your back, pull up your knees, put your feet next to each other on the bed, tilt your pelvis by pushing your back into the bed. Now lift up your





head slightly, moving your hands towards your knees. Make sure you don't push. Relax.

- Lie on your back, pull up your knees with feet on the bed. Tighten stomach and buttock muscles and try to lift up your bottom. Lower your bottom and relax.



Day 3: Do the same exercises as day 1 & 2 plus the following

- Lie on your back with legs stretched out. Bring one knee to your nose, return leg to outstretched position. Bring the other knee to your nose, return leg to outstretched position.
- Lie on your back, pull up your knees, bring your hands in your neck. Gently move both knees to the left, then to the right whilst keeping your shoulders on the bed.



Day 4: Do the same exercises as day 1-3 plus the following

- Lie on your back, pull up your knees, put your feet next to each other on the bed, tilt your pelvis by pushing your back into the bed. Now lift up your head and shoulders, touching your knees with your hands whilst keeping your feet on the bed. Relax.



Day 5: Do the same exercises as day 1-4 plus the following

- Lie on your stomach. One by one lift up an outstretched leg.
- Lie on your stomach with your arms next to your body. Lift up your shoulders, head and arms. Relax.
- Lie on your stomach. Try to lift your belly button from the bed.
- Sit on the side of the bed, back stretched straight, keep your head high, tighten tummy and bottom muscles.



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