

Postnatal Exercise Guidelines

These general guidelines give you a starting point to plan your return to post-natal fitness.

Note: Check with your Doctor or Obstetrician if you have any questions about your exercise program, or before you start any new exercise program.

For further advice, speak to your Fitness Instructor or Physiotherapist with a special interest in Women's Health.

0-3 weeks post-natal

- Walking
- Postnatal abdominal bracing
- Pelvic floor exercises

For exercising after a caesarean, please seek advice on how quickly you can return to exercise.

See our [Postnatal Firm Foundations TM exercise handout 0-3 weeks](#).

3-8 weeks post-natal

It is recommended that you wait until your 6-week post-natal check, before commencing a group exercise program or getting back into your gym program.

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- Walking
 - Swimming (once bleeding stopped)
 - Gym programs - maintain posture, light weights, no breath holding
 - Post-natal abdominal and pelvic floor exercises
 - Low impact aerobics or post-natal class
 - Low intensity water aerobics classes (once bleeding stopped)

See our [Postnatal Firm Foundations TM exercise handout 3 - 8 weeks](#).

8-12 weeks post-natal

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- As for 3-8 weeks, increasing intensity/weights
 - Progress post-natal abdominal bracing and pelvic floor exercises eg post-natal abdominal bracing with "leg loading". Check with your Fitness Instructor or Physiotherapist for ideas.

Consider a post-natal abdominal muscle check

See our [Postnatal Firm Foundations TM exercise handout 6 - 12 weeks](#).

12-16 weeks post-natal

- Abdominal and pelvic floor muscle testing prior to return to higher impact exercise / running / sport, and commencing regular abdominal exercise programs.

Pelvic floor muscle fitness should be back to pre-pregnancy.

If not, seek further advice before starting other activities.

See our [Postnatal Firm Foundations TM exercise handout 8 - 16 weeks](#)

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 or vaginal heaviness or urine loss during or after exercise. If you do, slow down or reduce your intensity level.

See our [Postnatal Firm Foundations TM exercise handout 16 - 24 weeks](#)

Seek further advice from your Doctor or Physiotherapist if any problems persist.

Extract from "Considerations for Pregnancy and Post Natal Exercise" pamphlet, developed by Dianne Edmonds, Project Officer - Physiotherapist, during the Pregnancy and Post Natal Health and Exercise Project, 1999, Eastern Goldfields Medical Division of General Practice. Reprinted with permission. Copyright 2011 - 2016. Demac Resources Pty Ltd. www.thepregnancycentre.com.au