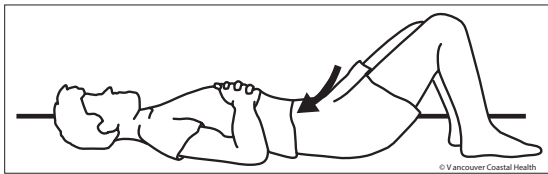


Early Postpartum Exercises

These early exercises are a good place to start when you're ready to start exercising after birthing. Most people who give birth benefit from strengthening their pelvic floor and abdominal muscles. Some birthers do not. If these exercises make you feel worse, best to see a pelvic floor physiotherapist for an assessment.

Exercise 1: Pelvic Floor Strengthening/Relaxing

A strong pelvic floor is essential for posture and for effective control of your bowel and bladder.

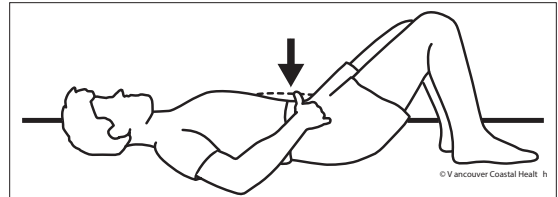


- Start by doing these movements lying down on a bed, the floor, or sitting on a chair (not the toilet).
- Imagine you are trying to stop peeing or passing gas. Visualize trying to lift your pelvic floor up inside your body.
- Hold the "lift and tighten" feeling for a count of 2-3 seconds, breathe normally.
- Initially this may be difficult or uncomfortable; if so, just try a short gentle squeeze. As you get better, you can increase the amount of time that you can hold it.

- Nothing should move on the outside of your body, so try to avoid clenching your bottom, squeezing your legs together or holding your breath. You are working internal muscles, so no one should be able to tell that you are doing the exercise.
- Gently release and allow your pelvic muscles to fully relax. Take a deep breath in slowly expanding your lower chest.
- Repeat this exercise 5-10 times. Work up to holding the 'lift and tighten' feeling for 10 seconds.
- Do 3 sessions a day.

Eventually you should be able to do this exercise when standing.

Exercise 2: Abdominal Tightening



- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Place your fingertips on each side of your lower abdomen just above your pelvis.
- Keep your upper body relaxed and breathe in gently.
- As you breathe out, gently tighten your abdominal muscles as if you are trying to pull your belly button away from your hands and in towards your spine. You should feel a gentle muscle tightening under your fingertips but no movement of the spine.

more information on other side →

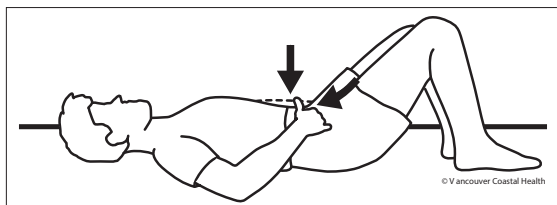
<p>Call 8-1-1 Healthlink BC www.healthlinkbc.ca</p>	Nurse	24 hours a day	Daily	<p>Call 8-1-1 to speak with a nurse, ask a dietitian about nutrition, or a pharmacist about your medication.</p>
	Dietitian	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Mon – Fri	
	Pharmacist	5 p.m. – 9 a.m.	Daily	
	Hearing Impaired	Call 7-1-1		

Early Postpartum Exercises (continued)

- Hold the tightening for a count of 2–3 seconds, breathe normally.
- Repeat the exercise 5 times. Gradually build up to hold the muscle contraction for a count of 5 as able.
- Do 3 sessions a day.
- As you become more comfortable with the exercise, try doing it in different positions (sitting, standing and walking).

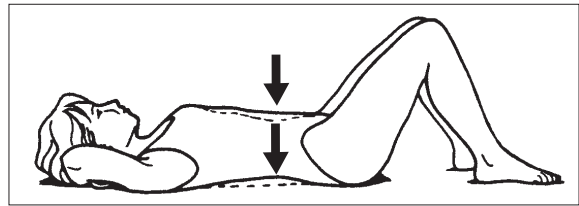
Exercise 3: Core muscle coordination

Now put Exercise 1 and Exercise 2 together.



- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Place your fingertips on each side of your lower abdomen just above your pelvis.
- Lift and tighten your pelvic floor up inside your body as in Exercise 1.
- Pull your belly button towards your spine as in Exercise 2.
- Hold the tightening for a count of 2–3 seconds, breathe normally.
- Repeat the exercise 5 times. Gradually build up to hold for a count of 5 as able.
- Do 3 sessions a day.
- As you become more comfortable with the exercise, try doing it in different positions (sitting, standing, lifting and walking).

Exercise 4: Pelvic Tilt



- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Flatten your back by tightening your abdominal muscles to rock your pelvis back.
- Hold this position for a slow count of 2.
- Relax and release back to neutral position (back slightly curved).
- Repeat the exercise 5 times. Gradually build up to a count of 5 seconds as able. Breathe normally.

I can't feel anything. Am I doing something wrong?

When you are first learning the above exercises, it can be hard to feel that you are lifting and tightening your pelvic floor or pulling in your abdominal muscles. If you still can't feel anything, connect with a Physiotherapist who specializes in pelvic floor/abdominal muscle strengthening.

OR

Check out this website for great postpartum exercise advice:

There are more ideas on how to progress your exercises and activity postpartum on this website:

<https://www.bepelvichealthaware.ca/postpartum-exercise>

<https://www.bepelvichealthaware.ca/exercises>