



Women's Health Physiotherapy Advice Post Caesarian Section

The following information includes techniques, exercises and advice to help after your caesarian section.

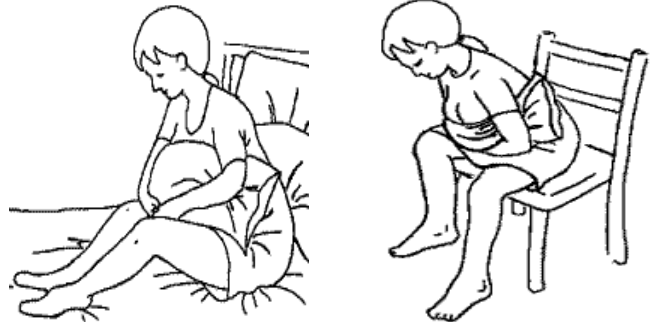
Deep Breathing Exercises

- Prevent chest infections
- Aid relaxation and pain relief
- Promote good circulation

Take 3 or 4 deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Relax and repeat 3 or 4 times. Repeat hourly throughout the day until you are fully mobile again.

If you need to cough, sneeze, laugh or cry it is easier if you support your wound as follows

- In bed or sitting – have your knees bent and support firmly above the wound pressing downwards (so you do not get a pull below the wound).
- With either option use a pillow, blanket or your hands to support near your wound.



Circulatory exercises

Although you will be fitted with special stockings, it is still important to do these exercises to aid your circulation while you are not moving as much as usual:

- Move your feet briskly up and down at the ankles, and also in a circular motion.
- Bend your knees up and down a few times (slow and controlled movement to prevent pulling at your tummy)
- Squeeze your bottom muscles a few times.

You should start these exercises as soon as your feeling returns in your legs. Continue hourly until you are fully mobile again.



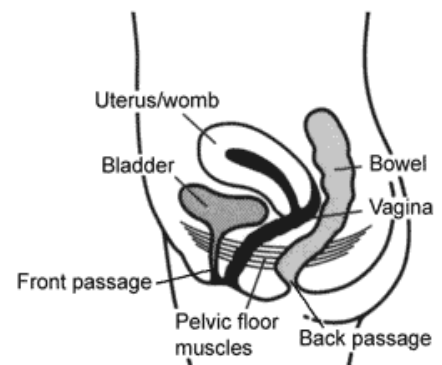


Getting out of bed

- Bend your knees and roll over on to your side, ease your feet over the edge of the bed and push yourself up sideways to sit on the edge of the bed.
- To get from sitting to standing, ease yourself to the edge of your bed or chair. With one foot slightly in front of the other lean forward and stand up. Pushing up from the bed or chair arms will help.
- If you stand up straight there is less strain on your back or wound.

Pelvic Floor Strengthening

Your pregnancy may have weakened your pelvic floor because of the baby's weight. This exercise helps to prevent any future bladder or bowel problems AND prolapse. This needs to be part of your daily routine FOR LIFE.



To exercise the pelvic floor:

- Do not attempt this exercise until 24 hours after your catheter has been removed.
- Imagine you are about to pass wind so tighten around your back passage.
- Still squeezing your back passage, tighten your front passage as if stopping passing water.
- Try to feel the squeeze and lift inside.
- Hold for 3 secs, then relax, do five of these and follow with five quick ones (nips). As this gets easier, try to gradually build up to 10 secs.
- Ensure you are not holding your breath or squeezing your buttocks.

You may occasionally try to **“stop mid-stream”** but DO NOT DO IT MORE THAN ONCE A MONTH (it can cause other bladder problems).

Apps to recommend : **NHS Squeezy** and **Kegel Kat**. They help you to remember to do your pelvic floor exercises regularly and help you monitor your progress

Watch all videos including pelvic floor function and exercise at:

Barnsley Hospital – Maternity Service – Your Pregnancy

www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/services/maternity-services/early-weeks-of-your-pregnancy/

Abdominal Muscle Strengthening

As you are sitting or standing pull your tummy button in towards your spine. Hold it for 5 – 10 seconds and then repeat 5 – 10 times. Try to get into the habit of doing this exercise frequently everyday. Do not hold your breath during the exercise, only hold your tummy!



Exercises to help ease stiffness, backache and encourage the passage of wind

Pelvic rocking:

Lying on your back with a pillow to support your head, bend your knees and keep feet together. Gently tighten your tummy and bottom muscles, flattening the hollow of your back on to the bed (see diagram). Relax and repeat rhythmically. You can also do this exercise sitting in a chair. After 5 days you can start doing the pelvic rocking exercise and holding in the tilted position. Gradually increase the length of hold and the number of times you do it.



Knee rolling:

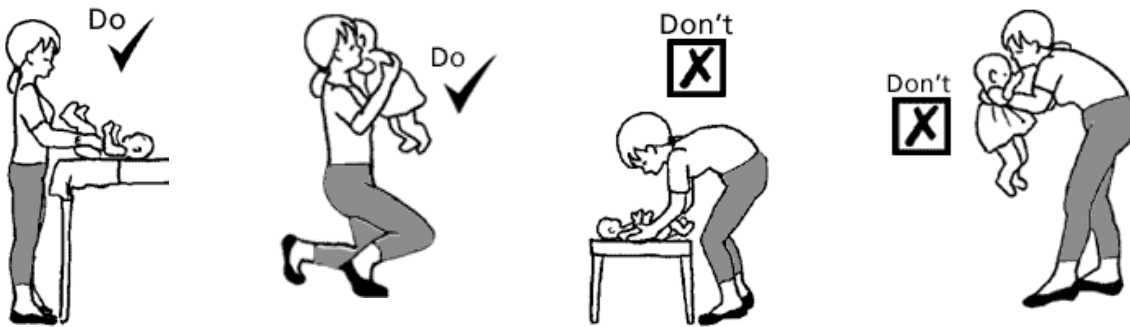
Lying on your back with a pillow to support your head, bend your knees and keep feet together, gently roll your knees to one side, back to the middle and then repeat to the other side. If you do these exercises before you get out of bed you will find getting up a lot easier – you stiffen up when you are asleep or in one position for any length of time. At 5 days gradually increase the length of hold and the number of times you do it.



Advice for home

- Do not overdo things – your body heals best when you are resting.
- Be mindful of your posture. Always make sure that you are sitting supported. Make sure that you are not stooping over too much or for any length of time.

- Stand tall, engaging your core muscles and be mindful of the position of your back. Lift from your knees rather than your back.



- Do not push the pram for 4 – 6 weeks. This also applies to household chores such as hoovering, ironing, sweeping. If you are doing activities which are pulling on your scar it is telling you that you are doing too much and to rest.

It is recommended:

- No lifting for 4 – 6 weeks. The heaviest thing you should be lifting is your baby.
- No driving for 4 – 6 weeks. You must be able to do an emergency stop prior to commencing driving again. Practice this with the ignition turned off and when you are fully able – contact your insurance company to inform them of the surgery and that you can now perform an emergency stop safely (Policies will not be affected)
- Keep doing the above exercises and build up activity gradually. Build up walking as you feel ready. If you enjoy swimming wait until you have had your 6 week GP check up, your wound has healed and your blood loss has ceased.

Be careful with high impact exercises for 3 months if you are bottle feeding or for 3 months after you have finished breast feeding. This is because your ligaments take a few months to recover from the effects of pregnancy.

If you have any questions when you get home, please contact the Women's Health Physiotherapy team 01226 432375 or 431281.

Reviewed: July 2020 Review: July 2022