



Early post- partum phase

Postpartum recovery exercises

for patients



Department

Physical medicine and rehabilitation

Dear patient!

You recently gave birth to your child.
Congratulations!

You are now in the early postpartum phase.
This takes 2 weeks for a vaginal birth and
3 weeks for a cesarean section.

The muscle balance between the abdomen and the pelvic floor has been disturbed due to overstretching and strain. The normal feeling of tension in the pelvic floor may be reduced, which can lead to temporary weakness of the urinary bladder and bowel blockage. Do not worry, as this is normal. However, it is all the more important that you support the recovery process with exercises (from easy to difficult), combined with targeted breathing.

In this folder you will find exercise instructions that will strengthen the pelvic floor.



Tips for exercising

- + Getting up and walking supports your circulation and recovery processes.
- + Start exercising the day after the birth.
- + Practice regularly and several times a day, slowly and with concentration.
- + Your bowel and bladder should be emptied beforehand and your breast fully empty drunk
- + After birth, your pelvic floor needs a rest period due to overstretching and overuse of the muscles. For this reason, no strengthening or active pelvic floor exercises should be done until your wound has healed (2–3 weeks).

Exercises

1

Exercise 1: Abdominal breathing, activating the lower abdomen while lying on your back



Place your hands on your lower abdomen. Allow the air to flow into your belly through your nose and slowly out through your mouth. Then try to pull the pubic bone towards the navel without any visible movement. To enhance, you can slowly exhale with the sound of “pf”.

10 repetitions

2

Exercise 2: Abdominal breathing, activating the lower abdomen and the lateral abdominal muscles while lying on your side.



As you slowly exhale through your mouth, try again to pull your pubic bone towards your navel. The hand on your belly controls the expansion of your lower abdomen when you breathe in and the contraction when you breathe out. As you breathe out, imagine the upper abdomen narrowing and use thoughts such as “narrow the ribs” or “button up blouse.” The lower abdomen must remain tense when doing this.

10 repetitions on each side

3

Exercise 3: Abdominal breathing, activating the lower abdomen and the lateral abdominal muscles while lying on your side



Close your top hand into a fist and place it on the surface in front of you at navel height. Again, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, try to pull your pubic bone towards your navel. When doing this, first press your fist lightly, then more and more firmly, onto the surface. Notice the increasing tension in the abdominal muscles, especially the lower side abdominal wall. Then do this on the other side too.

10 repetitions on each side

4

Exercise 4: Abdominal breathing, activating the lower abdomen and the lateral abdominal muscles while kneeling in all-fours position



As you slowly exhale through your mouth, try to pull your pubic bone towards your navel. Keep your spine straight.

10 repetitions



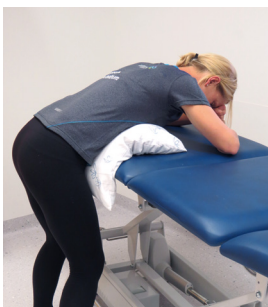
Relief positions for the pelvic floor

Prone position, standing prone position

Prone position: Place a firm pillow under your lower abdomen and then lie on your stomach. You can intensify the exercise by doing abdominal breathing again.

In case of a cesarean section, first use a “*standing prone position*” until lying on your stomach is possible. Place a firm pillow under your lower abdomen and place your upper body on a table with your legs on the floor. You can intensify the exercise by doing abdominal breathing again.

3 – 5 times a day for 5 minutes



Barrel position

To relieve pressure on the pelvic floor and prevent prolapse problems



From the 3rd week after birth

From now on, the focus is on the awareness of the pelvic floor, as well as the conscious use of the pelvic floor during pressure loads (correct strong coughing/sneezing). Your imagination can help you feel the pelvic floor better. A few exercise suggestions are:

- + Try to “blink” or “wag” with your pelvic floor muscles.
- + “Wag” the tip of your tailbone toward the pubic bone.
- + Water lily: open and close the petals.
- + Elevator exercise: imagine you are slowly lifting your pelvic floor from bottom to top over several levels and back again like an elevator.

Everyday life and sports

- + **from now on:** walks with strollers
- + **after 6 to 8 weeks:** training for the back, swimming, cycling on the flats and Pilates
- + **after 6 months:** light horseback riding
- + **after 9 to 12 months:** shock strain such as running, jumping, hopping

We recommend a more extensive recovery program starting with the 6th week after birth.

If you still have problems with your pelvic floor a year after giving birth, have it checked by a gynecologist.

Tips for early postpartum time / puerperium

- 1 Stand up and lie down by rolling on to your side (no sit-ups).
- 2 No baths, no tampons during the post birth vaginal discharge
- 3 Lie on your belly or use a standing prone position several times a day. This supports recovery of the uterus and promotes drainage of the vaginal discharge.
- 4 For vein problems or leg pains, wear compression stockings and have a doctor check this. Also, do not cross your legs.
- 5 Avoid overstretching the inside of the leg to protect the pubic symphysis joint (no cross-legged position).
- 6 Use a chilled cherry pit pillow for hemorrhoids.
- 7 Correct sitting position on the toilet: when urinating, sit upright and arch your back slightly. For bowel movement, round your lower back.
- 8 Make sure your posture is upright in everyday life and that you are well supported when breastfeeding.

Contact

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