

# PRACTICAL POSTPARTUM

## Recovery Guide

for restoring your core, pelvic floor, & more

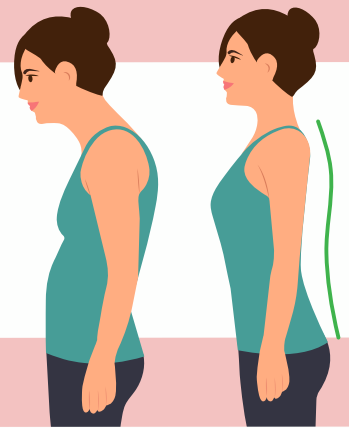


### Heal and Rest

Your body is adjusting back from all the changes it experienced during pregnancy. Your organs got squished, diaphragm was pushed up, ribs spread, abs stretched, and your pelvic floor specifically went through a lot of stress, stretching, and maybe even trauma during pregnancy and childbirth (vaginal delivery and cesarean). Due to these changes and continued hormonal changes, your body requires time to heal and restore. Your pelvic floor and core are very vulnerable during this time, therefore, it is important to be patient and remember "just because you can, doesn't mean you should"

### Posture

During pregnancy, your body adapted to carrying the weight of the baby likely resulting in increased anterior pelvic tilt, an increased lumbar curve, rounded shoulders, and forward head posture. These changes result in some muscles lengthening or turning "off" and other muscles overworking to compensate and support your body. During postpartum, our goal is to resume good posture through mobilizing stiff areas and reactivating the appropriate muscles.



### Breathing

360 breathing is an optimal breathing pattern which supports good core strength and control, good diaphragm excursion for supplying your body with oxygen and removing co2 as well as helping move organs back into place, reducing stress levels, and helps with maintaining a properly functioning pelvic floor that ebbs and flows along with your breath.



### Pressure Mgmt & Awareness

Right off the bat, you are handed a newborn to care for and often times need to resume other tasks at home such as lifting and carrying a sibling, carrying baby in a carseat, lifting a laundry basket etc. It is essential to learn proper pressure management techniques and awareness of poor loading of the abdominal wall and bearing down on the pelvic floor. Practice and master Hip Hinging with abdominal control and pressure management to lift or pick up children and items making sure to exhale on exertion. Continue this technique in order to prevent injury and protect your pelvic floor, back, and core.



### Core & Glute Function

In order for your core to function properly, posture must be stacked which includes ribs stacked over a properly aligned pelvis. This will take practice but is essential for core stability and coordination with the pelvic floor. In order for your pelvis to be properly aligned, the glutes who often turn "off" during pregnancy (hello term "mom butt") need to come back on board. Practice bringing awareness to your glutes, if you notice glute clenching, modify your posture and allow your glutes to be utilized, lengthening and contracting through functional movements.



# Foundational Exercises

## Phase 1

[ Weeks 0-4 ]



### Intensity Recommendations

- Take time to appreciate everything your body went through, the goal of this phase is rest, recovery, and bonding with baby. Be mindful of your limits.
- Throughout this guide, increase slowly and back off at the first sign of poor pressure management, abdominal doming or bulging, or signs of heaviness and/or bulging of pelvic floor
- Avoid: hard plyometric type exercises (i.e. jumping jacks), front ab exercises (i.e. planks, sit ups, push ups), running/hard, biking/hard, swimming
- Safe Cardio: Start in blocks of 5-10 minute walks (starting after week 1), see how your body feels. If you feel good, progress the next day and so on until you reach 30 minutes then progress by picking up your pace. Focus on your breathing and staying tall. Pay attention to signs of overdoing like heaviness through the pelvic floor or worsening diastasis

### Cat Cow Stretching

**Set up:** Start on your hands and knees. Hands directly under your shoulders. Knees directly under your hips.

**Movement:** Arch your spine up and down, slowly feeling each segment of your spine move. Focus on the areas that feel stiff and try to get them to move a little more than the parts that easily move. Use a mirror to see what parts are moving more easily than others. Do not arch so far that you feel straining on your abs or diastasis. 2 sets x 5 reps



### Angel Wings

This exercise is about simply getting your arms and upper back moving to restore posture and prevent chest and shoulder tightness caused by holding baby, nursing, and/or feeding.

**Set up:** Lie on back. Use head support if it feels better (or if it's difficult not to arch back) **Movement:** Place hands up by your ears then slide arms overhead and back down. Start connecting the reach with an exhale to connect core and get the mid back moving. This exercise is gentle and should not be painful. Do one arm at a time if it is too uncomfortable with both, then progress. 2 sets x 8 reps

### Side-Lying Breathing

**Set up:** Lie on side and support abdominals with folded towel. Curl into a ball to help your breath expand into the back. **Movement:** Focus on feeling where your inhale goes. The aim is for 70% to go into the back and sides, and 30% down into the pelvic floor. Start connecting abdominals on the exhale and working on getting a core contraction. Ribs come down and in, connecting lower abs. **Feel:** Entire rib cage expanding in 360 degree breath, abdominals engage, breath moving all the way down to the pelvic floor **Do Not Feel:** Neck and shoulders, too much inhale down into your pelvic floor. 3 sets x 5 breaths

