Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Post Natal Exercises

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Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Post Natal Exercises

Patient Information

Maternity/Women’s Health Services

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Circulation

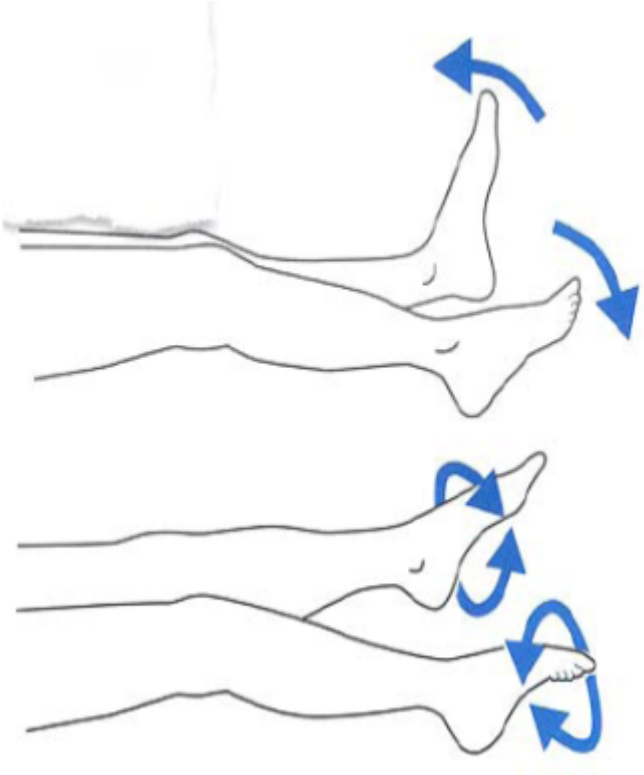
Avoid crossing your legs for at least two weeks, but it is better to avoid it for life.

If your legs are swollen, lie with your feet up and supported for at least 20 minutes at a time. Place a pillow behind your knees, as this is more comfortable. This will help to reduce any swelling in your legs and prevent complications.

Whilst in this position:

Pull your toes up towards you then let your foot relax down.

Do 10 repetitions with each foot.



Make large slow circles.

Do 10 repetitions with each foot

Posture and back care

Good posture is maintaining the three natural curves of the spine.

It is important to take care of your back if you have had a baby. It will be

vulnerable for five to six months after birth whilst your body returns to normal.

When changing nappies do not stoop, either kneel at something low

or stand at something high to maintain good posture.

When feeding your baby, find a comfortable position to maintain good

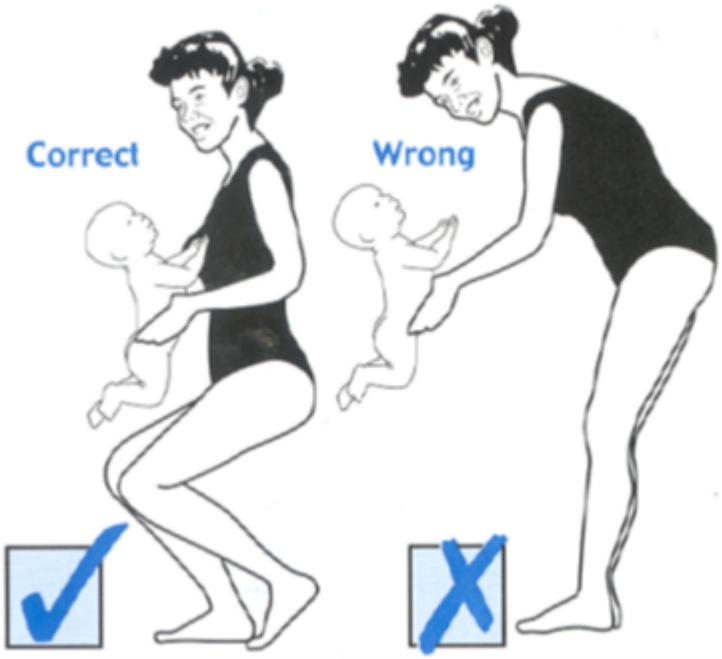
posture. Place a pillow in the small of your back and one or two pillows

on your knees to support the arm cradling your baby.



Lifting

Do not lift any heavy objects such as carrycots, baby baths or toddlers for at least six weeks. If it is unavoidable to lift, remember to bend your knees and tighten your pelvic floor muscles. Hold heavy objects close to your body.



The Pelvic Floor

This is the group of muscles that form a sling at the bottom of the pelvis. They are easily damaged during childbirth.

Exercising them could help reduce discomfort and swelling.

Increasing the strength of these muscles may stop leakage from your bladder or bowel. Exercising them can also help to prevent prolapse and may improve your sex life.

The Pelvic Floor Exercises

Imagine that you are trying to stop yourself from passing wind and at the same time trying to stop the flow of urine.

It should feel like a lift and squeeze. Avoid:

- Clenching your buttocks
- Pulling in your tummy
- Holding your breath
- Stopping the flow of urine in the toilet

It is important to exercise your pelvic floor muscles in the following ways:

Slowly: Tighten the muscles and hold tight for as many seconds as you can up to 10 seconds.

Relax for five seconds.

Do this tightening and relaxing for as many times as you can up to 10 times.

Fast: Tighten the muscles for one second and relax for one second.

Try and do this 10 times.

These muscles need to be exercised regularly throughout the day e.g. when feeding your baby.

If you are worried about these muscles or are having leakage from the bladder or bowel, ask to see your Obstetric Physiotherapist via your midwife or GP.

Exercises

You should start to tone up your abdominal muscles as soon as you feel well enough. Work the deep muscles of the abdomen first as they reduce strain on your back and pelvic floor.

For the first six weeks

Exercise your pelvic floor (as previous).

Exercise 1

- Find the most comfortable position e.g. sitting or lying on your side
- Pull in your belly button towards the spine as though you are tightening a belt, keeping the spine still
- Hold for a maximum of 10 seconds and then relax
- Repeat this up to 10 times

This exercise should be done two or three times per day in any position.

After six weeks

You can progress to:

Exercise 2

- Lying on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor
- Roll the pelvis backwards and slowly lift your bottom, waist and every bone in your spine gently off the floor until a horizontal position
- Lower gently
- Repeat up to 10 times

Exercise 3

- Lying on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor
- Tighten your abdominals
- Gently lift your head and look through the knees
- Hold for up to 10 seconds
- Repeat up to 10 times

If exercise 3 causes the neck to be painful, then leave it out.

Exercise 4

- On your hands and knees, keeping your back straight, pull in your belly button towards your spine, keeping your back still
- Hold for up to 10 seconds
- Relax
- Repeat up to 10 times

These exercises should be done two or three times per day.

If you have any specific questions about exercise, ask your Pelvic Floor Dysfunction Physiotherapist for advice. Telephone 01942 264960 and ask to speak to your Pelvic Floor Dysfunction Physiotherapist, Monday and Tuesday 9.30pm – 2.30pm; Wednesday and Thursday 9.30am – 5.30pm

Contact Details

If you have any specific questions about exercise, ask your Pelvic Floor Dysfunction Physiotherapist for advice:

Telephone **01942 264960** and ask to speak to your Pelvic Floor Dysfunction Physiotherapist.

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