



KEEPING YOUR BACK STRONG AND HEALTHY- NEW MUMS

Having a new baby in the house can be wonderful, but you may have noticed that your back is getting sore. “New Mothers Back” in the post natal period is not uncommon. Strengthening your deep tummy and pelvic floor muscles as well as implementing a few small changes at home can help you take control of your back pain.

Low back pain:

Low back pain can often be due to frequent bending, carrying and lifting your newborn. You may also find that sitting for long periods, especially in soft chairs/couches (e.g. when feeding your baby), can give you a sore lower back.

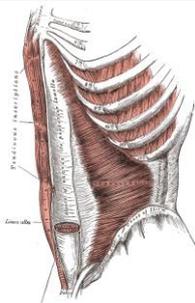
Upper back pain:

Pain in the mid-upper back area may also arise due to the increase in bending and lifting associated with caring for a newborn. This can put strain on the muscles in the shoulders and upper back, especially as your child gets heavier. Also supporting the weight of your baby while they feed and/or awkward sustained positions can also cause soreness in your upper back.



Your Tummy and Pelvic Floor Muscles:

The pelvic floor function to pelvic floor bowel control)



We have 3 Abdominus (TA) the spine at the

muscles are a sling of muscles sitting at the base of the pelvis and support the pelvic organs, including the bladder and bowel. The muscles therefore assist in maintaining continence (bladder and and core stability.

layers of stomach muscles with the deepest layer – the Transverse – providing the most support for our spine. This muscle attaches to back and wraps around your tummy to meet at the front.

During pregnancy, the tummy and pelvic floor muscles will have stretched and weakened while accommodating your baby. Therefore, in the postnatal period, it is important to strengthen the deep tummy and pelvic floor muscles to help maintain good bladder and bowel control as well as provide support and stability for the lower back and pelvis.

Strengthening your pelvic floor muscles:

When doing pelvic floor exercises you should feel a squeeze and lift, then a let go/relax of the muscle. You might like to imagine you are trying to stop yourself urinating mid-stream or trying to stop yourself passing wind. Try to keep your bottom and thigh muscles relaxed. You can do your pelvic floor exercises in lying, sitting or standing.

Start with 10 x 2-3 second holds and build up to 10 x 10 second holds. Each contraction should be your strongest. Do 3 sets per day.

Fitwise Physiotherapy Pty Ltd ABN 72 350 151 597

EAST MELBOURNE

372 Albert St East Melbourne VIC 3002

ARMADALE

1095 (Rear) High St Armadale VIC 3143

P 03 9486 0512 F 03 9486 0513

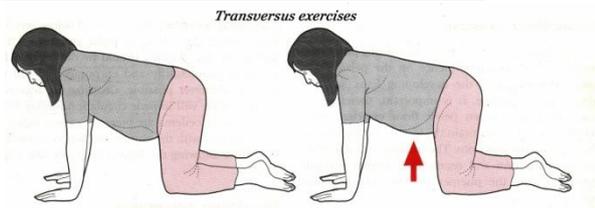
fitwise@fitwise.com.au

www.fitwise.com.au





Strengthening your tummy muscles:



Kneeling on all 4's, relax your tummy while still keeping your back flat. Then gently draw the lower portion of your abdomen (between your belly button and pubic bone) in towards your spine. This is not a big movement. You shouldn't feel all of your abdominals or bottom muscles contracting. Your

back should remain still, long and flat. Aim to hold this contraction for 2-3 seconds to start with and just like your pelvic floor muscles, build to holding for 10 seconds x 10 repetitions. Try to do this exercise 1-2 times per day.

Strategies to help reduce your back pain:

- ❖ Avoid lifting anything heavier than your newborn for the first 6 weeks after having your baby. For example, toddlers, heavy shopping bags, loads of washing, suitcases etc.
- ❖ Use a small rolled up towel or pillow in your lower back to provide extra support while you are sitting. This may be useful while you feed as well.
- ❖ Think about your posture – are you slumped to one side? Bent forwards? Supporting all of your baby's weight with your arms?
- ❖ Use pillows or the arm of the couch or chair to support the weight of the baby while feeding or holding
- ❖ Improve the strength of your deep abdominal muscles to provide support for your spine. Think about engaging these muscles, and your pelvic floor muscles, each time you bend or lift or change position. For example, rolling over in bed, lifting your newborn and sit to stand.

Toddlers:

- ❖ Try to reduce the amount/frequency you lift your toddler where possible. For example, instead of picking your child up to cuddle/console, squat or kneel down.
- ❖ Bend down to your toddlers level for cuddles or play with them down on the floor
- ❖ Use their independence and step-stools to then assist them to climb in/out of the car, bath etc. Boosting them under the bottom or holding their hands to do the task can reduce the requirement for lifting.
- ❖ Try changing nappies on the floor with a mat, or kneeling in front of your bed, instead of lifting them to the change table.



Stretches: Hold each stretch for 15-20 seconds. You can do on both sides, twice.

