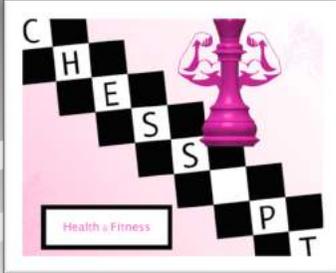


MUMMYFIT

HOME PROGRAM



First of all...

Congratulations on your new bundle of joy!! Whether this is your first, second, third or more – little babies bring so much joy into our lives! Enjoy every moment!

Working on a new you!

While you are absolutely in love with this new little person, and in awe of what your body was capable of, you may not recognize your body. You might have some stretched skin, pelvic pain or “excess baggage”. I’m not going to make promises about “getting your old body back” – that’s irrelevant. Your body is new – you have nurtured a child inside you, you have given birth – what’s more womanly than that? Over the next 6 weeks we will focus on helping your body heal and recover from childbirth.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT ME:

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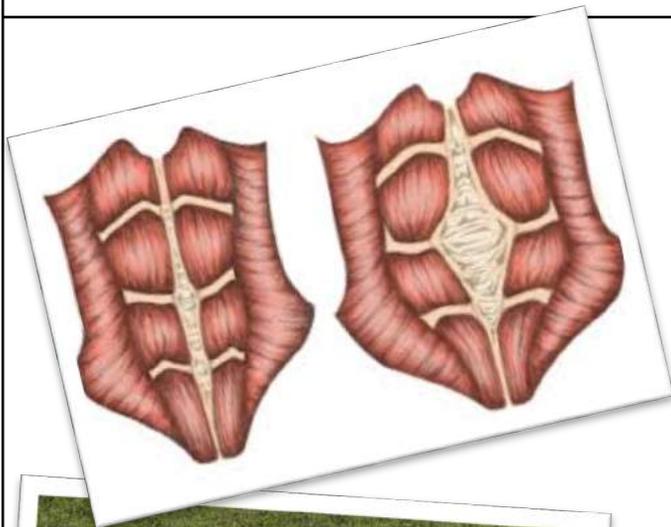
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DISCLAIMER:

**** All the exercises are considered safe, but it is still always recommended to check with your healthcare provider before starting any training program! ****

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LET'S TALK ABOUT THAT GAP

Diastasis Recti (DR) is the separation of the right and left abdominal muscles from the midline.

Fifty-three percent of new mums have DR immediately postpartum.

(Boissonnault & Bleschak 1988).

IF LEFT UNTREATED

Your body will rely on other muscles to support your pelvis. This comes with a whole lot of other issues including:

- Back Pain
- Pelvic Pain
- Incontinence
- Pelvic Organ Prolapse
- A “mummy tummy” that never goes away



EVEN THOUGH IT IS EXTREMELY COMMON – NOT MANY PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF IT. GOOD NEWS IS THAT IT CAN ALMOST ALWAYS BE FIXED WITHOUT SURGICAL INTERVENTION!

WHAT TO AVOID

Any exercise which puts forward pressure (or bulging outwards) on your abdomen should be avoided as it just makes DR worse! This means NO sit-ups, NO crunches and absolutely NO front planks (or prone holds).

Poor posture and an imbalanced Core 4 (diaphragm, transverse abdominis, multifundus and pelvic floor muscles) can also lead to DR worsening. And this is why rehab and recovery is VERY important before beginning a conventional exercise program!



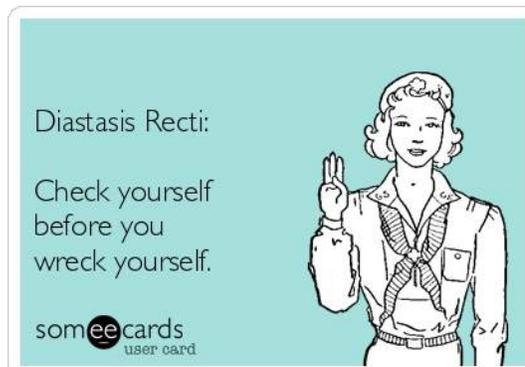
SO HOW DO YOU CHECK FOR DR?

- 1 Lie on your back with your knees bent, and the soles of your feet on the floor.
- 2 Place one hand behind your head, and the other hand on your abdomen.
- 3 With your abdominal wall relaxed, gently press your fingertips into your abdomen.
- 4 Roll your head and neck off the floor into a "crunch", keeping your shoulders down.
- 5 Move your fingertips back and forth across your midline, feeling for muscle to close around your fingers. Test for separation just under your ribcage, above your belly button and just above your pelvis.
- 6 A diastasis recti gap is measured in finger widths. You are aiming for a 1-2 finger gap or less, but don't panic if it's much bigger at first.
- 7 If you cannot feel the muscles closing around your fingers, keep adding fingers
- 8 Even more important than the actual separation is the tension (or lack thereof) in the connective tissue along the midline (also known as the Linea Alba). Contracting the muscles should create some tension along that line, if not, there is some serious reconnecting work to be done, and it may be best to seek the advice of a physiotherapist.



SIGNS THAT YOU MAY HAVE DR

- A gap of more than 2 1/2 finger-widths when the muscles are fully contracted.
- The gap does not shrink as you contract your abdominal wall.
- You can see a small mound protruding along the length of your midline.



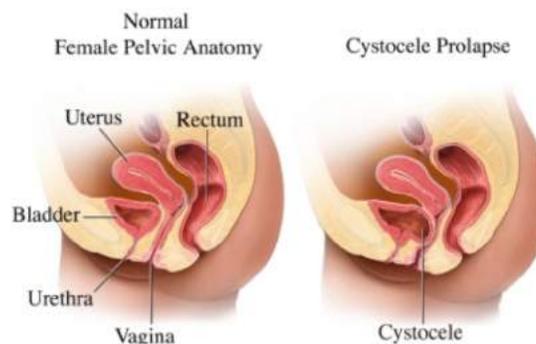
WHAT ABOUT PROLAPSE?

Pelvic Organ Prolapse is something that many women are faced with after childbirth. Once you return to exercise, a few tweaks should be made to your exercises to make it safe for you, so always remember to tell your Fitness Professional that you have a prolapse (if that is the case.)

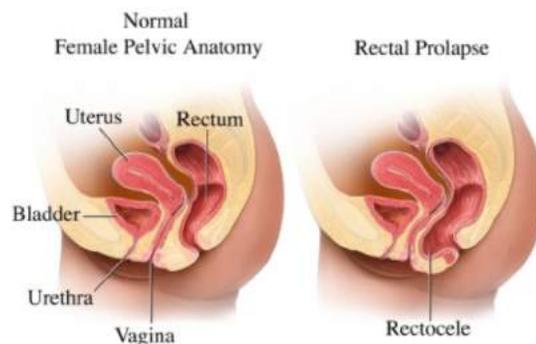
BUT HANG ON A SEC – I’M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF.... WHAT IS PROLAPSE??

This is when one (or more) pelvic organs droop down in towards the vagina or rectum. The three most common prolapses new mums face are:

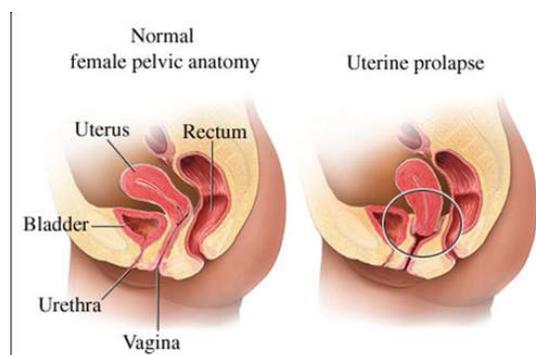
Cystocele (Prolapse of the bladder)



Rectocele (Prolapse of the rectum)



And Uterine (Prolapse of the Uterus)



DIFFERENT GRADES

Not all prolapses are severe. There are different grades of prolapse – measured from 0 – 4 i.e. 0 where there is no prolapse and 4 when the organs have descended to their furthest point and are bulging out of the body. Many women who have prolapses aren't even aware of the prolapse as it is so mild and manageable, however some aren't as lucky. And again I stress the importance of proper core and pelvic floor strengthening during pregnancy and after you have bub!

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE PROLAPSE?

Symptoms include:

- Heaviness or downward pressure in your pelvis
- Pain or pressure in your lower abdominals or vagina
- A lump or something bulging out of your vagina
- Feeling like you are not completely relieved after going to the toilet (not feeling empty)
- Pain, discomfort or less sensation during sex
- Frequent Urinary Tract Infections
- Feeling weak in your pelvic floor

SO NOW WHAT?

If you suspect that you may have a Pelvic Organ Prolapse, please make sure that you see a Physiotherapist ASAP to get the proper diagnosis and start doing corrective exercise! A qualified and experienced Postnatal Fitness Expert can work with the Physio to deliver a safe exercise program.

www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au has a heap of helpful resources on the issue.



EXERCISE MISTAKES MUMS MAKE

Poor Postnatal programming could do more harm than good! Here are the 3 biggest mistakes to avoid:

1. DISREGARDING THE STRESS THAT THE CORE AND PELVIC FLOOR HAVE UNDERGONE

Diastasis Recti and Incontinence are common after giving birth. Running and crunches are common in Postnatal Training. New Mums will need to be careful about getting back into it too soon!

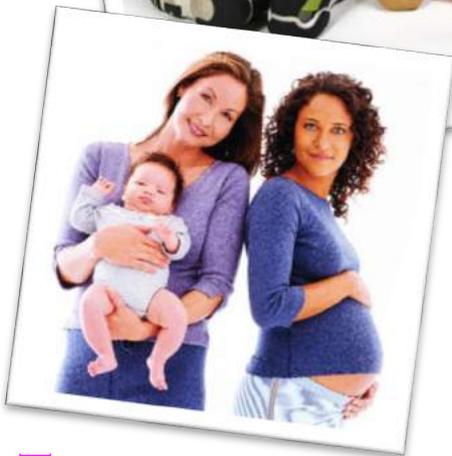
2. TOO MUCH STRETCHING – NOT ENOUGH STRENGTH TRAINING

Your body secretes a hormone that relaxes the joints for childbirth. Postnatal exercises should focus on strengthening and keep stretching to a minimum!

3. TOO MUCH HIGH-INTENSITY TOO SOON

Give yourself a break! With broken sleep, and extra stress your body won't have time to recover from a HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) session like before you were pregnant. First settle into your routines, and give your pelvic floor time to heal before getting into your high intensity workouts!

For the first 6 – 8 weeks you should aim to follow this home program (about 10 – 20 minutes per session). Once you've had your 6-week check-up and you feel good at around 8 weeks, you can start longer workouts – but it is still best to have these workouts programmed by a postnatal fitness specialist! Joining a Mums and Bubs Group Fitness Program in your area would be beneficial at this stage and this would help you connect with other new mums!





LET'S TALK ABOUT C-SECTIONS

After 3 C-sections I have first hand experience on this topic. And I can also tell you there is a major lack of post-surgical education! You're handed this baby and told not to do anything for 6 weeks. You have had major abdominal and pelvic surgery! I won't go into the details of the actual procedure – some things are best left unknown.

So what happens when you get your 6-week clearance from the doctor to resume exercise? Well, you're keen to get straight into it. Not so fast though! If you needed postnatal rehab and recovery with a vaginal birth, you need even more with a C-section! If you had a surgery on your knee for example, would you get straight back into running once you have your 6-week check? No! Same with a C-section.

When you do return to exercise after a C-section, make sure it is very light exercise – walking, core restoration (as you will find in this program) and basic bodyweight exercises. Even though your scar seems healed on the outside, you have many

layers below the scar which will take longer to heal!

And don't fall into the "I had a C-section, my pelvic floor is fine" trap. Any pregnancy places pressure on your Pelvic Floor so core and pelvic floor exercises are as applicable to you as to someone who had a vaginal delivery.

In the early weeks after having baby, it is very important for you to rest and relax as much as possible. NEVER sit straight up from a lying down position, always roll to the side. You can start by doing some Core Breath and Pelvic Floor exercises. Walking – the quicker you get back on your feet, the easier recovery will be, however don't push yourself. Only very short walks!

Once you have had your 6-week checkup you are welcome to walk a bit further and return to very light strength training (as outlined in this book).

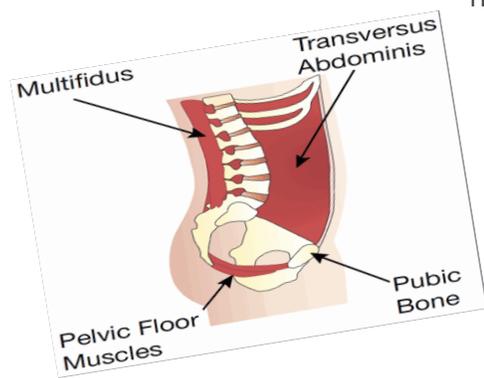
But most of all, make special time to bond with your new baby!

BACK TO BASICS

POSTURE

Your whole posture changes during pregnancy to compensate for your growing belly. When you've had bub, it takes a while (and a lot of practice) to fix the bad posture. Bad posture can lead to back problems, a diastasis that won't heal and a whole lot of other dramas! Always think: "Ribs over hips". That puts you into a neutral spinal position. (See picture to the

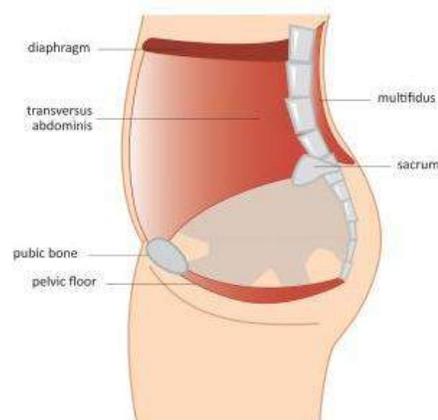
right)



Another postural cue is to "Zip your fly", your fly being your stomach separation. If you are sagging, your fly will be open and everything will hang out. So "zip your fly" and keep it all in! (If your ribs are over your hips, your fly will be closed!

THE CORE 4

That is a term coined by the people at Bellies Inc and it describes the four parts that make up the inner core unit. They are the Diaphragm, Transverse Abdominis (TvA), Multifundus, and Pelvic Floor.



All the parts of the Core 4 are essential for developing core stability and keeping ourselves in proper alignment! It's a bit of a chain reaction and all the links work together, but if one link doesn't do what it should, the whole chain will break down. A good starting point is the Core Breath. This is an exercise you can do hours after giving birth as it helps you to focus on your breathing. Aim to do 2 sets of 10 Core Breaths every day, from as early as possible to help your Core and Pelvic Floor restore and rehabilitate.

HOW TO DO PROPER CORE BREATH:

STEP 1:



Lie on your back, place one hand on your ribcage, and one hand on your belly. Inhale and breathe into your hands, feel your ribs expand, exhale and feel it all contract.

STEP 2:

Start connecting your breath to your pelvic floor. When you inhale, feel your pelvic floor soften. Picture that your diaphragm is “picking up your pelvic floor” so you feel a gentle contraction as you exhale. Now ladies, when I say “contraction”, I’m not talking about those awful moments during labour. Rather, it should feel like you are picking up blueberries with your vagina and anus. Don’t squeeze too hard (we’re not crushing boulders!!), because you do not want the blueberries to explode! As you inhale again, put the blueberries down and feel everything return to normal.

Step 3:

Start firing up the core – picture your hips are connected with a small string. Gently tighten the string, drawing your hips

together. To feel when it is all activated, I usually get my clients to place their fingers just inside their hips. The moment your core fires up and as soon as you engage the pelvic floor you should be able to feel a gentle tightening.

The aim is to train your body to be able to fire up everything without all these cues. And also retrain yourself to be able to hold the core and pelvic floor for longer periods whilst being able to breathe normally and hold a conversation.

Baby steps – it all takes time, but if you start doing these exercises soon after giving birth, you will pick it up much quicker. Your body enters a natural healing phase for the first 6 weeks after giving birth. So all the rehab and recovery activities you do then will help your body better restore itself!

NOW FOR THE FUN STUFF!

As soon as you feel well enough to, you can begin with the **MUMMYFIT**. The exercises may seem very basic and simple, but with proper form and technique they are so very beneficial! Try to go through the Core & Pelvic Floor Exercises EVERY day. The whole routine will only take about 6-7 minutes of your time once you learn the exercises and become comfortable with them. Do this consistently for 8 weeks - beginning at the start of Week 3 postpartum if you've had an uncomplicated Vaginal Birth and the start of Week 4 postpartum if you've had a C-section. Let your body be the guide though! If you don't feel up to it yet, focus on rest, relaxation and breathing, which is as crucial to your recovery as exercise.

HOME PROGRAM PHASE 1: (WEEK 1-4 OF PROGRAM)

Exercise	Reps
Alignment Check – Ribs over hips, zip the fly	Mental check at least 10 x per day
Lying Down Core Breath	10 Breaths
Glute Bridges	10 Reps
Heel Slides	10 Reps – on each side
Clamshell	10 Reps – on each side
Squat – not full range	10 Reps
Static Lunges	10 Reps – on each side
Resistance Band Pulls	10 Reps
Seated Core Breath	10 Breaths

HOME PROGRAM PHASE 2: (WEEK 5 - 8 OF PROGRAM)

Exercise	Reps
Alignment Check – Ribs over hips, zip the fly	Mental check at least 10 x per day
Childs Pose Core Breath	10 Breaths
Glute Bridges + Knee Extension	5 Reps – on each side
Walk Walks	5 Reps – on each side
Hip Abduction	10 Reps – on each side
Prisoner Squat	15 Reps
Reverse Lunges	10 Reps – on each side
Lat Pull Downs	15 Reps
Seated Core Breath	10 Breaths

EXERCISE LIBRARY

Alignment Check	http://youtu.be/_5uwA7i1Fel
Lying Down Core Breath	http://youtu.be/vyqKYR_K-Ss
Glute Bridges	http://youtu.be/ple6HjkGtSw
Heel Slides	http://youtu.be/fGJS8bY92DA
Clamshell	http://youtu.be/2tUnV3Ay_uw
Squat – not full range	http://youtu.be/P0M-hXipqzl
Static Lunges	http://youtu.be/AVGi-NEg_G0
Resistance Band Pulls	http://youtu.be/gDHaUYLdVRM
Seated Core Breath	http://youtu.be/KiVMzbrjijY
Childs Pose Core Breath	http://youtu.be/RAwCuGZnJZY
Glute Bridges + Knee Extension	http://youtu.be/wDNsuoGcndM
Walk Walks	http://youtu.be/J2xGjYd3UpI
Hip Abduction	http://youtu.be/YzytVzaGddY
Prisoner Squat	http://youtu.be/Vi4QXLhM47I
Reverse Lunges	http://youtu.be/mazzw81shAA
Lat Pull Downs	http://youtu.be/di9D_thleNY



RETURNING TO MORE CONVENTIONAL TRAINING

Again, and I cannot stress this enough, let your own body be your guide. Some people feel okay to start strength training much earlier than others. My number 1 tip to mums returning to the gym is to take it easy. Keep the loading light and be aware of your own energy levels! Take your time to get back to your regular workouts.

Here are some things to avoid:

- Running and any plyometric (bouncy) exercises – this could be too much for your pelvic floor
- Crunches and Situps, V-Ups, Jackknives – or any other abdominal exercise which could cause your core to bulge out. Rather stick to Heel Slides and Walk Walks for a while!
- Front loaded exercises (plank or pushups): if you are doing pushups, make sure you do them on an incline – starting with wall pushups and slowly over a period of time working your way down to a regular pushup
- Avoid overhead pressing for the first few weeks while you become more comfortable with your pelvic floor and its function. If you do have a prolapse, perform exercises while lying on your back, side or sitting up.

It is still beneficial to your recovery to see someone who is trained in postnatal fitness to ensure that you get the safest possible exercises that will aid, and not inhibit, your postnatal recovery journey. And remember – it took your body 9 months to grow a baby, don't expect to be back to your "old self" before then! Just enjoy this new journey and learn to love your new body! It was part of a major miracle after all!

ABOUT ME

I am a mother to three beautiful boys and the owner of **CHES PT – HEALTH & FITNESS**. My passion in life is fitness for all ages and fitness levels, but I do have a special place in my heart for prenatal and postnatal fitness – especially because there is such limited information available to new mums! I am hoping to spread the word about postnatal rehabilitation and recovery!

I am a fully qualified Personal Trainer with an extra qualification in Prenatal and Postnatal Exercise. I am also fully registered and accredited with Fitness Australia.



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