

After Your Cesarean Birth: What You Can Do

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How to move more easily:

- **Support your incision.** Use a small pillow or hands when coughing, sneezing, laughing or moving.
- **Get in and out of bed from your side.** This causes less strain on your stitches and your lower back.
- **Move around in bed or walk within your room.** You will have fewer aches and less stiffness. This will also help your bowels to move.
- **Stand and walk tall.**
- **Keep your legs and feet elevated** on the bed or footstool. This will help control the swelling in your feet and legs.
- **Avoid heavy housework** and lifting anything heavier than your newborn for the next 4-6 weeks.

Exercise Program:

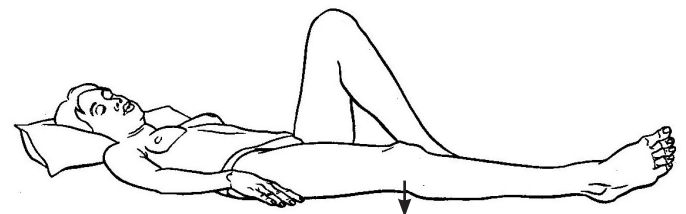
- Start the following exercises right after your surgery.
- Do them morning, afternoon and evening.
- Come to the Postpartum Physiotherapy Class before you go home (see back page).

Exercises 1 and 2 help to:

- open up your lungs
- get the blood moving in your legs.

1. Deep Breathing

Breathe in and feel your ribs expand at your sides and back. Then breathe out slowly. Do this 2 times. Use a small pillow or towel to support your incision if it is painful.



2. Foot and Leg Exercises

Do these next 4 exercises with your legs straight and resting on the bed.

Do them 5 to 10 times with each leg.

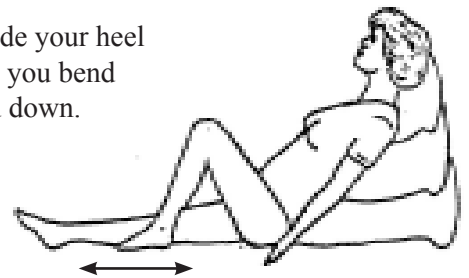
Ankle Pumps: bend and stretch your feet at the ankles (feel a stretch behind your calf)



Foot Circles: circle your feet at the ankles. Repeat in the other direction.



Heel Slides: slide your heel along the bed as you bend one knee up and down.



Quad sets: with your leg straight, press the back of your knee into the bed to tighten your thigh muscle.

Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.

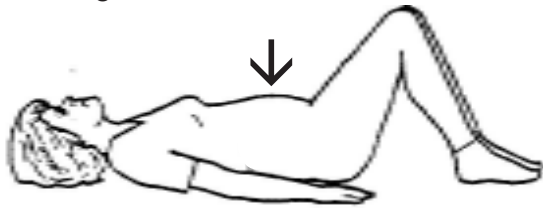
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Exercises 3 and 4 are important for:

- Back comfort and posture
- Stronger tummy muscles
- Passing gas

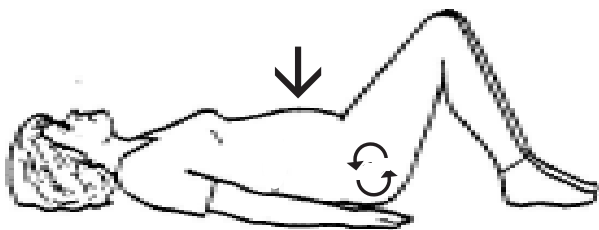
3. Tummy Tucks (Deep Stomach Muscle Exercise)

As you breathe out, tighten your tummy muscles below your belly button (just like you would if you were putting on a tight pair of pants). Hold for a few seconds, while continuing to breathe, then relax. Practice tummy tightening when you are lying, sitting and standing.



4. Pelvic Tilt

Tighten your tummy muscles (as above) and tuck your seat under to flatten your lower back on the bed. Hold for 5 seconds, while continuing to breathe. Relax and feel the curve return. Try this exercise on your side when it is comfortable.



Exercise 5 improves:

- Bowel and bladder control
- Support for your pelvic organs
- Overall core muscle strength

5. Pelvic Floor Exercises (Kegels)

Begin this exercise **after** the catheter is removed.

Hold'ems: Pull up and tighten inside as if to stop yourself from passing urine and gas. Hold for a slow count of 5. Relax completely. Rest 10 seconds before trying your next one. Repeat 5 times. When this becomes easy, hold longer and do more.

Speed'ems: Tighten the pelvic floor muscles quickly and strongly. Hold only for 1 or 2 counts. Relax completely. Repeat 5 times. This exercise is important to help stop leakage when you cough, sneeze or lift.

Postpartum Physiotherapy Class

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Monday, Wednesday or Friday

Room 2N41B
(opposite Balsam Square)

This free one hour class will show you:

- how to care for your back
- good postures while caring for your newborn
- how to begin early postpartum exercises safely

This is **not** an exercise class.

Please come as you are and your newborn is welcome in cot or carrier.

Plan to attend one class:

- prior to going home
- anytime after going home during the 6 weeks postpartum time
- phone 604-875-2126 to register if attending after going home