

# Postnatal Exercise

## Guidelines for postnatal exercise

- Postnatal exercise is as important as antenatal exercise. Its duration needs not be long but it should be done twice or thrice a day. Repeat each set of movements about ten times in every session
- Keep your breathing smooth, work gradually according to your capability
- A physiotherapist may make modification to the exercise according to your physical conditions

Note: This leaflet is only a brief introduction to postnatal exercise. You are advised to join a postnatal exercise class organised by physiotherapy department.



## Purposes of postnatal exercise

- Strengthen pelvic floor muscle to prevent incontinence
- Prevent low back pain
- Speed up the restoration of body shape
- Stimulate blood circulation and enhance appetite
- Maintain vitality and self-confidence which make you feel good

## When should I start postnatal exercise after delivery?

Two days after normal delivery, you can get off the bed to walk around and do postnatal exercise. If you had a caesarean section, you should not begin until advice is sought from a physiotherapist or a doctor.

Online Version



## Types of postnatal exercise

### Pelvic floor exercise

- Lie on your back
- Bend your knees
- Put your feet together with your knees about 1 feet apart
- Tighten the vaginal, urethral and anal muscles as if trying to withhold urination or defecation

You can also do this exercise in sitting or standing position.



### Back and abdominal exercise (1)

- Lie on your back and bend your knees with your feet slightly apart
- Breathe out and tighten your abdomen. Press your pelvis downwards to flatten your low back against the bed



## Back and abdominal exercise (2)

- Lie on your back
- Bend your knees and keep them together. Tighten your abdomen and flatten your low back against the bed. Bring both knees to right side so as to let your right knee touch the bed as far as possible
- Return to the starting position and rest
- Repeat but turn to the left

5 seconds



## Back and abdominal exercise (3)

- Lie on your back and bend your knees
- Tighten the muscles of your hips, upper back and low back
- Lift your hips to straighten your low back. Hold for a while and lower your hips slowly



## Back and abdominal exercise (4)

- Kneel on all fours, keeping both hands and the knees on the floor
- Tighten your abdominal muscle and round your back. Then flatten your back slowly



## Back and abdominal exercise (5)

- Lie on your back and bend your knees, keeping your feet together
- Tighten your abdomen, and press your pelvis downwards to flatten your low back against the bed
- Lift your head and shoulders just off the bed with both hands touching the knees, hold for a while, and lie down slowly



## Back and abdominal exercise (6)

- Lie on your back and bend your knees, keeping your feet together. Tighten your abdomen, and press your pelvis downwards to flatten your low back against the bed
- Lift your head and shoulders to make the right shoulder point towards the left knee. Touch your left knee with both hands, hold for a while, and return to the starting position slowly
- Repeat to the right



## Points to Note in Daily Life

### (1) Back Care

To lift an object or hold a baby, remember to bend your knees and keep your low back straight with the strength of your thigh muscles, and then straighten your knee joints to lift the object or the baby

### (2) Proper way to get up in bed

Lie down sideways with both legs hanging over one edge of the bed. Push up your upper body by straightening both arms and get up

### (3) Proper standing posture

Keep your back straight and tighten your abdomen

### (4) Proper sitting posture

Keep your back straight with your feet flat on the floor

### (5) Take sufficient rest and do appropriate exercise



(This leaflet is prepared by the Department of Health and the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association)