

RESTORE



5 CORE EXERCISES

TO PREPARE YOUR POSTPARTUM BODY FOR HIGH
IMPACT ACTIVITIES

YOUR



CORE



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WHY IS THE CORE SO IMPORTANT WHEN IT COMES TO HIGH IMPACT ACTIVITIES?

If we want to improve, shouldn't we focus on leg strength and speed? Yes, BUT a stable core is NECESSARY to improve speed. Our core muscles stabilize our head, spine, and the pelvis. If the pelvis is not stable, then our legs do not have a stable base to work from. When we strengthen our core we are able to provide our legs with a stable foundation to work from. Want to jump higher? Strengthen the core. Want to run faster? Strengthen the core. Want to try more challenging high impact activities? Strengthen the core.

I experienced this first hand. The first time I tried to complete a running "speed workout" on the track after my second was born, I literally could not move my body quickly. My brain said "go", my legs said "go", and my core said "hahahaha! No." Much of recovery postpartum is focused on healing from our pregnancy and birth experience, and rightfully so. But once we are ready to get back at it again, we are often left wondering where to start? Do we just pick up where we left off or do we need to make some changes to adapt to these "new" bodies we have. This is where core strengthening comes in!



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WHEN YOU WANT TO START WORKING TOWARDS HIGH IMPACT ACTIVITY POSTPARTUM, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS WE SHOULD DISCUSS FIRST.

1. Having a baby does a number in your body. Besides being feeling like total badass for making a human, you will likely feel like your are living in a strange new body that doesn't respond like it used to. Your core has weakened, your pelvic floor has had extra stress on it the last nine months, you might not be sleeping great, and you just want to feel "normal" again. To get back to feeling like you are in control, you are going to need to put in some work. When I say work, I don't mean hours in the gym, and when I say normal I certainly don't mean you need to "get your body back". I simply am saying that with a few exercises you can help strengthen your core, you can start walking, running, jumping, and pushing it hard in your workouts without your body fighting against you.

2. Diastasis recti is not the end of the world. Most (if not all) women who experience pregnancy will present with some degree of Diastasis or abdominal "separation". This happens when the tissue connecting the rectus abdominis stretches to allow baby to grow. The tissues usually don't actually separate (that would cause a hernia) but stretch and become relaxed. Some of these heal on their own and some need some help. As you heal this Diastasis and strengthen the core muscles affected, you improve your ability to participate in high impact activities because you provide your body the stability it needs to perform these activities.

Don't know if you have a Diastasis? Read on!!

HOW TO ASSESS A DIASTASIS:

1. Lay on your back with your knees bent
2. Lift your head and shoulders just enough off the ground to contract your abdominal muscles.
3. Using 2-3 fingers, feel along the linea alba (the center of your abdomen), gently pressing into your stomach. Check the length of your abdomen and if you find a place where your fingers sink in, assess by how many fingers fit in the space .
4. The number of fingers is the “grade” of separation.



When we think core work, the tendency is to think crunches, sit ups, planks, etc. While these exercises are great, they are not always great on a postpartum body, especially if you are experiencing a DR. If you have DR, forward flexion exercises should be avoided until you are able to heal and develop good working tension in the affected tissues. These exercises are a great way to help that process in addition to strengthening your core muscles. These exercises are intended to help you progress beyond your initial recovery and help you progress more into a return to activity phase.

EXERCISES

1



SUPINE GLUTE BRIDGES:

Laying on your back with your knees bent. Lift your hips off the floor, hold for 1-2 seconds and slowly lower back down

SIDE PLANKS:

Sitting on the side of your side, place your hand or elbow on the ground and your feet together, lift your hips off the floor and straighten your body. Hold this position for 15-30 seconds to start and progress as you become stronger.



2

3



ELEVATED PUSH-UPS:

Place your hands on an elevated surface (ie. couch, kitchen chair, stair, etc.) and perform a push-up, lowering down as far as you can and pushing back up. As you become stronger you can progress to push-ups on the ground.

REMEMBER:

Quality is better than quantity, **EVERY TIME**. Take your time to learn the proper form first, you won't regret it!

EXERCISES



4



OVERHEAD WEIGHTED LUNGES:

Holding a weight overhead with both hands, perform a forward lunge. If a forward lunge hurts your knee, step backwards into a lunge position instead.

SWINGS:

Using a heavy dumbbell or kettlebell, slightly bend your knees and as you straighten them up, swing the weight up to shoulder height or overhead, which ever is possible.



5

HOW TO USE THESE EXERCISES:

These exercises can be added to your existing routine or can all be combined together for a workout.

To use these as a core workout, perform each activity for one minute, repeating the set 3 times for an 18 minute workout.

To add them in addition pick 2 exercises to incorporate each time you workout and perform 2 sets of 15 reps, (or 15-30 second holds on the planks instead of reps)

I'm so glad you are here!

I am Kelsey Decker, mom, wife and physical therapist. After having my first baby while in physical therapy school, and having my second baby in 2016, I found a passion for helping women realize their physical potential postpartum.

After having both my boys, I felt disappointed in the education and support readily available for someone like me to return to the activities I enjoy doing. I love to run and lift weights, and can confidently say that I can do both better NOW after having two kids than I ever did before. I learned a lot of things a long the way, and now I am here to share that with you! I can't wait to get to know you and see what you have in store. The opportunities are endless, whether is it to run a 5k in a certain time, workout more efficiently and often, or be active and healthy enough to keep up with all the demands of motherhood and womanhood, I've got your back. I am so glad you are here and can't wait to help you on your journey. Let's do this!

♥ Kelsey



Let's keep in touch!



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