

After Your Birth: Exercises and Perineum Care

How to help your healing:

- ✚ Ice to perineum for 10-15 min. and repeat 2-3 times a day for as long as it gives pain relief.
- ✚ Rest on back or side: sit up to feed self and baby, but spend time lying down to decrease pressure and swelling.
- ✚ Get in & out of bed from your side.
- ✚ Stand and walk tall
- ✚ Avoid heavy housework & lifting anything heavier than your baby for first month.
- ✚ Change peripad frequently.
- ✚ Use peribottle and sitz bath as directed by your nurse.

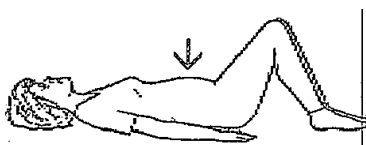
Exercise:

- ✚ Early exercise helps improve circulation of blood, reduces swelling and improves muscle support of pelvic and back bones.

What exercises should I do?

- ✚ Start these exercises soon after giving birth.
- ✚ Repeat 3 times per day.

1. TUMMY TUCKS



- ✚ Reduce low back pain
- ✚ Work pelvic floor muscles

Pull muscles below belly button toward back bone, as if putting on tight pair of pants. Hold for 5 seconds while breathing normally. Repeat 5 times.

2. PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE EXERCISES: KEGELS

- ✚ Improve or prevent bladder or bowel leakage
- ✚ Strengthen muscles that support pelvis
- ✚ Maintain good posture
- ✚ Strengthen overall core



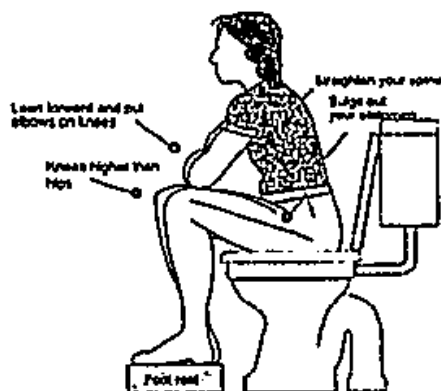
Pull pelvic floor muscles up and in quickly and strongly (as if stopping urine or gas from leaking). Hold 2-5 seconds, then relax. Repeat several times until muscle tires.

- ✚ Kegels should not be painful
- ✚ No glute (butt) squeezing
- ✚ Can do Kegels sitting, standing and lying down.
- ✚ It takes time for pelvic floor muscles to heal and work properly. You may have little or no control of urine during the first day or so. This is common, but should improve.
- ✚ Do Kegels 2-3 times a day.
- ✚ Over next few weeks should notice an improvement.

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For episiotomy, perineal tears:

A good toilet position



- ✚ Use a foot stool so your knees are above hips
- ✚ Sit leaning forward, with your feet apart and your elbows on your knees.
- ✚ Allow your tummy to relax.
- ✚ Don't hold your breath. Sigh deeply or make a hissing sound
- ✚ Consider supporting your stitches with a hand ; particularly when opening your bowels.

Helpful Hints:

- ✚ Pee regularly every 2-3 hours during the first few days.
- ✚ Drink plenty of fluids.
- ✚ Avoid drinks with caffeine such as black tea, colas, coffee. These will irritate your bladder
- ✚ Kegels will not damage your stitches.

If have concerns speak with your physician, midwife, or nurse.