

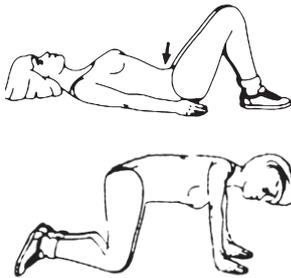
Deep Abdominal Muscle Exercise for All Postnatal Women

Your deep abdominal muscles help you to maintain good posture and back support. During your pregnancy, as the baby grows, your abdominal muscles stretch and their efficiency is reduced.

It is important to exercise these muscles regularly after the birth to prevent back pain and to regain muscular strength.

Exercise 1

- To begin, lie on your back with your knees bent and feet supported or kneel on your hands and knees.
- Breathe in, then breathe out and as you do so gently tighten your lower abdominal muscles by pulling your lower belly in towards your spine. Try to keep your upper abdominal muscles relaxed throughout the exercise.
- Hold abdominals on for 3 to 5 seconds, whilst breathing normally.
- Repeat 5 to 10 times, 3 times per day.



As you get stronger you can gradually increase the time that you hold for up to 60 seconds. You can also make the exercise more challenging by changing your position to sitting or standing. It is important to activate the deep abdominal muscles when you are lifting or walking to provide extra back support.

Exercise 2

During your pregnancy the curve in your low back increases in size. This is sometimes associated with lower back pain. It is important to correct this curvature after the birth of your baby.

- To begin, start in the position as below.
- Tighten your lower tummy muscles and this time flatten your lower back onto the bed or the floor by gently rolling the tail bone and tilting the pelvis towards your ribs. Repeat this exercise as many times as you're comfortable.



Tips for back care and correct lifting technique

- Bend your knees, keep your back straight and always tighten your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles as above. Hold the object firmly and close to your body.
- Do not lift any thing heavier than the weight of your baby for the first 6 weeks.
- Avoid sudden and repetitive bending and twisting movements.
- Make sure your working surfaces are at waist height (e.g. bathing & changing the baby).
- Create a supportive position for feeding. Place your bottom back in the chair, make sure your feet are supported and use support to help lift the baby up to your breast.

