



 **Life Ready** PHYSIO +
PILATES
CAMBERWELL

Staying active as a new Mum

Learn more lifereadyphysio.com.au

Congratulations!

Your bub has just arrived and what an exciting time.

You are probably experiencing a lot of things at the moment: excitement, curiosity, the ability to lie on your stomach again, fatigue, and a whole lot of learning new skills.

Navigating life with a newborn can be busy, albeit one of the happiest times in your life.

As a new mum, you develop a drive to always put your baby first. This means that you may neglect your own self at times, but here are our strategies that you can use right now to keep yourself active, while still tending to your baby's every need.

1 Get Checked



Pregnancy and birth is no small feat. In fact, your body goes through changes for nine months while you grow your baby. Then, your body experiences even more changes during and soon after the birthing process.

Whether you've had a normal vaginal delivery, to requiring interventions, to a planned C-section, to an emergency one, your body has gone through a lot.

Getting an assessment to determine your starting point for returning to exercise is essential. Your obstetrician or GP will review you at six weeks to determine you are medically well again. Seeing a physiotherapist at the same point in time will determine the effects of pregnancy and childbirth on your physical status.

Physiotherapists will be able to ensure that when you start exercising, you are starting at the right level. Some women will be ready for a higher level of exercise than others. Preventing pain and injury is much simpler than fixing it, so determining a safe starting point is essential.

Most mothers know that their pelvic floor gets a workout during birth, but what a lot of women don't realise is that the pelvic floor gets just as much of a workout in the pregnancy period as well.

In fact, by full term, your pelvic floor is dealing with the load of a 100kg person standing on a trampoline - that trampoline being the muscles that control your bladder and bowel, and that hold your pelvic organs in their correct place!

Regardless of your birth method, the pelvic floor will need strengthening post birth and a physiotherapist will be able to advise you on how to do this and how to integrate your pelvic floor strengthening into your other exercise goals.

The best news about pelvic floor training is that it can be done at any time and anywhere. Working on your pelvic floor strength can often be forgotten by new mums, so incorporating them into your daily routine is the best way to remember them.

Try doing them while you are feeding your baby. Feeds often take a long time in the initial months, so you will have plenty of time to complete your exercises, which only take a couple of minutes. Take your time allowing your baby to latch and get into a rhythm with feeding, and then when you are both relaxed, you can do some squeeze and lifts!



Pelvic Floor



3 DRAM

DRAM stands for Diastasis Rectus Abdominus Muscles. Essentially, these muscles are your longitudinal abdominal muscles, otherwise known as the six pack muscles. They meet in the middle by a length of connective tissue known as the linea alba.

As your baby and belly grow during your pregnancy, it is very common that these muscles will drift sideways, or separate. This is known as a diastasis.

Despite most women having a DRAM during pregnancy and the first six weeks following birth, it is important to get this assessed by a physiotherapist early.

Research has shown that in order to gain successful reduction of the DRAM, abdominal strengthening and training should occur during the first 12 weeks post birth. This is because in this timeframe, the linea alba has the potential to change. Beyond 12 weeks, the linea alba stiffens and the potential to reduce or correct the separation is almost impossible.

Most of the time, abdominal training occurs lying on your back. This is the perfect position for new mums to exercise in, as you can do it while your baby is completing their daily exercises. Babies need to complete tummy time and facetime (looking at their parents) daily to encourage their development. Prior to your baby being able to roll or crawl, they will be quite happy to lie on their tummy on top of your tummy, which means you can both work on your tummy time together! In fact, even the babies who find tummy time a challenge will tolerate it much better when they are being cuddled by their mum and have some facial interaction.

Be sure not to do this immediately after a feed though, as the milk is lightly to come straight back up - and you're in the firing line!



So much of a baby's life is about routine. Even the parents that decide a time-based routine isn't for them, will find that they at least have the same sort of daily activities: feeding, sleeping, tummy time, a walk to the park.

Having a routine is a great way to make sure you exercise on a daily basis.

Pram walking is a great, safe way to start exercising when you have clearance from your doctor. You can stop off at the local park and do some functional exercises with the baby in the pram. Things like squats and lunges are quick and easy to do. Your physiotherapist will be able to guide you through how to introduce these and progress these. Then you can ensure you complete your pelvic floor exercises during feeds, and your abdominal strengthening with your baby at tummy time. This means that you can still have your own time when your baby is sleeping to read, relax, or catch up on some sleep yourself. Think of this down time as rest for your mind, which is so important when you are sleep deprived, and learning many new skills when navigating life with a newborn.

Daily Routine



There, you have it!

Staying active as a new mum is easier to achieve than you think.

Remember that it takes two weeks to make or break a habit, so focus for the first two weeks on integrating your exercises into your daily routine, then it will become second nature.

Get your physical status checked by your physiotherapist and then enjoy getting active with your baby!