



# POTOMAC PHYSICAL THERAPY & REHAB

*Care that comes to you!*

## 5 EXERCISES DURING PREGNANCY

*Pregnancy is such an exciting time! Making announcements, shopping for cute baby items, dreaming about how life will change. Except...you start feeling that twinge of pain from the way your body and posture is changing. By doing a few safe, simple exercises throughout your pregnancy (as long as cleared to do so by your OB/GYN!), you can help ward off the aches and pains that may come with the changes of pregnancy.*

*Here are 5 exercises for mobility and keeping your muscles working to support you (and that growing little one!):*



### 1. Pelvic Tilts

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your knees and feet should remain hip width apart. If further along in pregnancy, you can do this in side lying. Take a deep breath in, allowing your belly to lift upwards. As you breathe out, gently tighten your pelvic floor and then flatten your back to the floor. (For your pelvic floor, you should feel as though you are lifting/drawing those muscles inward, as if you are stopping a stream of urination. To flatten your back to the floor, you should feel as though you are tucking your tailbone.) Breathe in, maintaining this position. Breathe out and relax. Perform for 10 repetitions.



### 2. Piriformis Stretch

Lie on your back and bend your affected knee. Cross this leg over your other knee, placing the outside of your ankle just above the knee of your unaffected leg. Let the knee on your affected leg drop out to the side, and bend the unaffected leg, sliding your heel towards your buttocks. You may feel a stretch through your affected buttock. To increase this stretch, interlace your fingers behind the thigh of your unaffected leg, and pull your thigh in towards you, lifting the foot off the ground. You can also place the foot of your unaffected leg up on a wall instead. If your belly is in the way, you can pull the knee of your affected leg toward your opposite shoulder, rather than lifting your legs up toward you. Hold this position 30 seconds. Perform on both sides as needed.



### 3. Open Books

Lie on your side with your head supported on a pillow and your knees bent at 90 degrees. Reach your arms out in front of you, with your hands together. Rotate the upper arm upwards and outwards from your trunk. Turn your head with opening your arm (look at your hand). Try to rotate as far as you can, without forcing the shoulder. Perform 10 repetitions on each side.



### 4. Gluteal Squeeze

Lie or stand with your legs straight. Tighten your buttock muscles as if you are trying to rotate your knees away from each other (NOT tucking your tailbone under). Relax your buttocks and your pelvis between repetitions. Hold squeeze for 5 seconds. Perform 10 repetitions.



### 5. Core Push Down

Stand with feet flat on the floor. Position a stability ball at chest/belly height or find a surface at chest height. Place both hands on the ball or surface. With your arms straight, gently press your hands into the ball/surface. You should feel both your abdominal muscles and the muscles around your chest and sides tense. Do not lean forward as you push down. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Perform 10 repetitions.



*Exercises adapted from <https://us.physitrack.com/exercises>*

*Please note, these are generalized guidelines to help prevent pain or to improve mild aches and pains. If you are experiencing symptoms that are not resolving, are interfering with daily life, or that you feel need more individualized guidance, seek out a physical therapist who can perform a comprehensive evaluation and provide you with an individualized treatment plan.*

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