



POTOMAC PHYSICAL THERAPY & REHAB

Care that comes to you!

5 EXERCISES FOR NEW MOMS

Being a new mom is tough! Between learning to care for your newborn to navigating your body's changes (and trying to get some sleep in there!), you may feel overwhelmed by it all. You may think exercise is the last thing you have time for, but doing a few simple exercises (once cleared by your OB/GYN!) can set you up for a healthy journey into motherhood with less likelihood for pain, incontinence, and fatigue as that baby grows!

Here are 5 exercises to get your core and hip muscles working to support you again.



1. Core/Pelvic Floor Activation

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your knees and feet should remain hip width apart. Take a deep breath in, allowing your belly to lift upwards. As you breathe out, gently tighten your pelvic floor and lower abdominal muscles. (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. For your lower abdominals, you can place your hands above and below your bellybutton, and feel that you are drawing your belly away from the hand below your bellybutton.)

Breathe in, maintaining this tension in your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles.

Breathe out and relax.

Once you can hold it for this sequence, increase the amount breaths you can hold the contraction for.

Perform for 10 repetitions, working up to holding for 5 breath cycles.



2. Core Marching

Lie on your back with both legs bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your lower abdominal and pelvic floor muscles, as in the first exercise.

Simultaneously slowly raise one leg, keeping your knee at 90 degrees. Slowly return your leg to the starting position while keeping your back and waist as still as possible.

Repeat this movement on the other side, ensuring you do not twist or arch your trunk.

Perform 5-10 repetitions per leg, alternating.



3. Bridge

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.

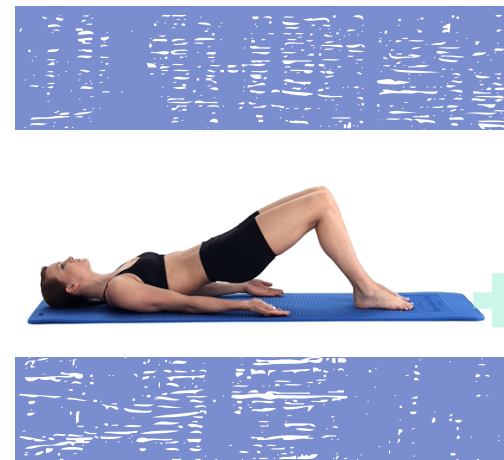
Tighten your abdominal muscles to flatten the small of your back against the floor.

Tighten your buttock muscles and tuck your tail bone underneath you.

Lift your hips off the floor until you have a straight line from your shoulders to your knees.

Make sure you keep your hips level throughout.

Perform 10-12 repetitions.



4. Clamshells

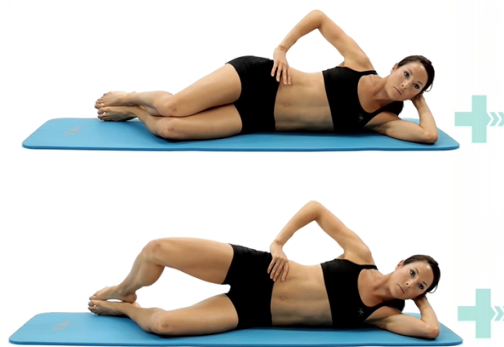
Lie on your side with your feet, ankles and knees together. Bend the legs a little and tighten your lower abdominal and pelvic floor muscles.

Keeping the feet together, lift the top knee up.

Make sure you don't roll your body back with the movement.

Control the movement as you bring the knee back down to the starting position.

Perform 10-12 repetitions on each side.



5. Kickbacks on Hands/Knees

Start on your hands and knees with your hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips.

Keep your back straight, as though you are trying to balance a glass of water on it.

Tighten your abdominal muscles to help stabilize your trunk as you slowly straighten one leg out behind you.

Lift your leg from the floor until you have a straight line from the back of your head to the heel of your foot.

Do not allow your hips or back to rotate with this movement.

Control the movement as you bring your leg back in to the starting position.

Alternate legs.

Perform 5-10 repetitions per leg, alternating.



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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