

## Mother and baby exercises



### AIMS


- To encourage the baby to move and strengthen their muscles.
- To reduce Mum's muscle and joint pain after having her baby.
- Strengthen parent-baby bonding

### IMPORTANT NOTES

- All exercises can also be done with Dad.
- Use exercises as an opportunity to play with your baby using eye contact, singing, tickling and talking.

*If you have pain or difficulty during exercise stop immediately, and seek further advice from your health professional.*





| WHAT?   | WHY?  | WHEN?   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>a) Pelvic floor exercises (see notes below)</p>  | <p><b>Baby:</b></p> <p>Strengthens neck.</p> <p>Tummy time reduces possibility of a flattening of the head by relieving pressure off the back of skull.</p> | <p>0-3 months: baby lies on Mum's chest.</p>        |
| <p>b) Rock pelvis up and down</p>                  | <p><b>Mum:</b></p> <p>a) Good position to begin practising pelvic floor exercises.</p> <p>b) Gentle exercise to loosen lower back.</p>                      | <p>3-6 months: baby resting back on Mum's legs.</p> |

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| <p>a) Tummy time</p>  | <p><b>Baby:</b></p> <p>Strengthens the neck and arms.</p> <p>Reduces the development of a flat head by relieving the pressure off the back of the skull.</p> | <p><b>Baby:</b></p> <p>Any age, from birth.</p> <p>Babies up to 6 weeks – practice tummy time with head to right and left sides.</p> |
| <p>b) Pull belly button in and lift tummy off ground.</p>  | <p><b>Mum:</b></p>   | <p><b>Mum:</b></p>   |

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|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|    | <p>a) Gives lower back a rest.</p> <p>b) Strengthens tummy muscles.</p>  | <p>a) As soon as able</p> <p>b) 6 weeks after birth.</p> |
|  <p>Swap Baby's position between right and left leg</p>  | <p><b>Baby:</b></p> <p>Strengthens neck. Reduces flat head by relieving pressure off back of skull.</p> <p><b>Mum:</b></p> <p>Stretches hamstring and inner thigh muscles.</p>   | <p>3 months after birth.</p>                             |
| <p>a) Mum rocks knees side to side</p>  <p>b) Pull belly button in and lift hips off floor – practice both sides.</p>  <p>Baby lies on side supported by towel.</p> | <p>a) <b>Baby:</b></p> <p>Lying on side helps baby learn to roll.</p> <p>Reduces pressure off one side of head.</p> <p>a) <b>Mum:</b></p> <p>Loosens the lower back.</p> <p>b) <b>Baby:</b></p> <p>Lying on side helps baby learn to roll. Reduces pressure off one side of head.</p> <p>b) <b>Mum:</b></p> <p>Strengthens muscles in the tummy.</p> <p>DO NOT STRAIN. If you find it uncomfortable stop.</p> <p>Try again in a few weeks.</p> | <p>Any age, from birth</p>                               |



a) Mini push-ups



b) Cat stretch: arch and lower back



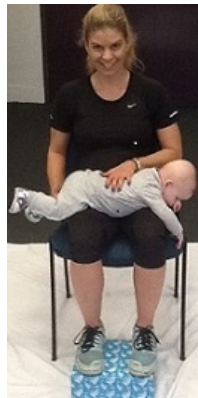
**a) Baby:**  
Face to face play with your baby.

**a) Mum:**  
Strengthens arms.

**b) Baby:**  
Face to face play with your baby.

**b) Mum:**  
Loosens up lower back and middle back.

Any age, from birth




Mum: Can do pelvic floor exercises:  
Turn the baby to face right, then left.

**Baby:** Strengthens neck.  
Reduces the possibility of developing a flat head by relieving pressure off the back of skull.

**Mum:** Encourages correct sitting posture.

4 weeks after birth.



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|---|---|--|
|  | <p><b>Baby:</b></p> <p>Stretches and strengthens muscles on side of neck (held sideways).</p> <p>Strengthens muscles back of head (held on tummy)</p> <p><b>Mum:</b> Strengthens leg muscles.</p> | <p><b>Baby:</b></p> <p>4 weeks after birth</p> <p><b>Mum:</b></p> <p>6 weeks after birth</p> |
| <p>Squats                      Lunges</p>   | <p>Baby can be held sideways or on tummy. Turn the baby to face right, then left in between each set of exercises.</p>  |  |

If you are unclear how to do your pelvic floor exercises speak to a health professional.

These exercises have been developed by Physiotherapists working in Children and Women’s Health at Your Community Health Centre.

If you would like to see a Physiotherapist at your Community Health please contact 8470 1111 and request an appointment.

Regards

Penny Janezic  
Physiotherapist

