

THE FEMALE FITNESS ACADEMY

Post-natal Exercise

THE DO'S

At around 6+ weeks after childbirth (13+ for a Caesarean) you may feel ready to begin a structured exercise routine. This timescale will vary however, dependant on the circumstances of your pregnancy and birth.

Listen to your body and don't do too much, too soon.

Below, we explain safe post-natal exercise.



GRADUAL, LOW-IMPACT

Any exercise you do now must build up very gradually in both length and intensity.

Cardio exercises should be low-impact. This means no bouncing, leaping, sprinting or jumping. Your joints, muscles, connective tissue and pelvic floor are still weak and vulnerable. Any high-impact exercises could cause injury/joint problems now or later in life.

For strength training, resistance needs to be light, with a focus on mastering form over speed or weight. We actually advise postural correction exercises first, before attempting heavier lifting.



POSTURAL-CORRECTION

The most effective post-natal exercises focus on postural correction. By this, we mean exercises which aim to re-align the body. Pregnancy can hugely affect your posture and it is best to correct as soon as possible. It won't happen itself, it will only worsen over time as you age or during future pregnancies.

Exercises should aim to fix muscle imbalances to reduce the risk of poor posture-related aches and pains/injury to the body.



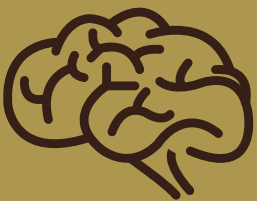
CORE/PELVIC FLOOR

Learning how to effectively recruit your deep core/pelvic floor muscles (and link them to efficient breathing) is crucial right now. Many women do this incorrectly which can be counterproductive. Once pelvic floor and deep core activation has been mastered, then training these muscles through a whole-body approach is the most effective way to improve the function and strength of these muscles.



AWARENESS/ACTIVATION

Due to postural changes, many of our muscles become weak and inactive during pregnancy. In particular, a good example is the glutes (bottom muscles) and the muscles of the upper back. Before attempting to perform heavy lifts or intense exercises, these muscles need to be "woken up" through activation exercises. Otherwise, you will compensate and overwork surrounding muscles whilst exercising and risk injury.



TECHNIQUE CORRECTION

Once your posture has improved, the focus must be on technique correction for major exercises. This means form over speed or intensity. There is no point performing an exercise incorrectly.

