

STAGE 2: Exercises for Your Tummy Muscles Service User Information Leaflet

Produced by: Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Service

Date of issue: Feb 2022

Review Date: Feb 2024

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Progressing your Exercises

This Stage 2 leaflet contains a series of exercises to continue strengthening your tummy muscles. It is important to progress your exercises slowly within your comfort levels. Listen to your body, if you start stage two exercises and notice an increase in discomfort, pain, doming, leaking, or bulging down below, stop these exercises and resume stage 1 exercises or contact your physiotherapist for advice.

Safe Exercise transitions

It is important that you don't put too much strain on your tummy muscles when changing exercises or getting up off the floor.

- 1) When lying on your back with your knees bent, roll on to your side keeping your tummy muscles engaged.
- 2) Breathe out as you push up from your elbow.
- 3) Get onto hands and knees to transition to your next exercise or stand up.
- 4) Do the same in reverse for getting down onto the mat.

Further information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/your-post-pregnancy-body/>
<https://pogp.csp.org.uk/publications/pelvic-floor-muscle-exercises-women>

References

THABET, A., ALSHERHRI, M., 2019. Efficacy of deep core stability exercise program in postpartum women with diastasis recti abdominis: a randomised controlled trial. *Journal of Musculoskeletal and Neuronal Interactions*, vol. 19, pp. 62-68.

LEOPOLD, M., SANTIAGO, K., CHENG, J., KELLER, L., ABUTALIB, Z., BONDER, J., SHARMA, G., TENFORDE, A., CASEY, E., 2021. Efficacy of a Core Strengthening Program for Diastasis Rectus Abdominis in Postpartum Woman: A Prospective Observational Study. *Journal of Woman's Health Physical Therapy*, pp. 147-163.

Stage 2: STRENGTHENING YOUR TUMMY MUSCLES

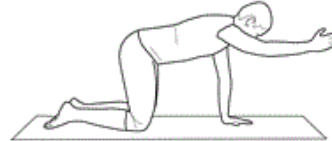
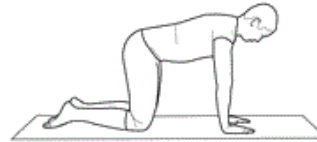


Pelvic Tilt

Lie on your back with knees bent

Alternately flatten and arch your lower back.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week



Arm Lift

On your hands and knees, hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Spine is in neutral position.

On breath out, lift one arm forward and then bring back to the starting position. Engage your tummy muscles and pelvic floor on the breath out. Lift only as high as you can control the position of your spine. Repeat with your other arm.

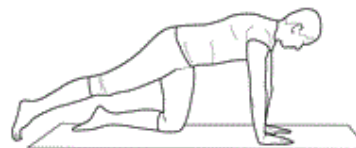
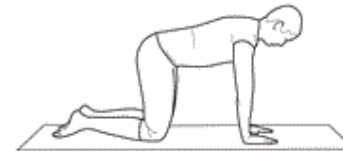
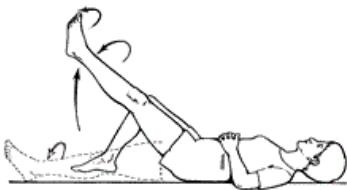
Leg Raise with Outwards Rotation

Lie on your back. Plant your left foot on the floor, knee bent and right leg straight out in front of you.

Inhale, then, with your right foot turned slightly outward, exhale and lift your leg up toward the ceiling, keeping your knee straight.

Think about tightening your tummy as you exhale. Breathe in to your belly as you lower the leg. Repeat on both sides.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week

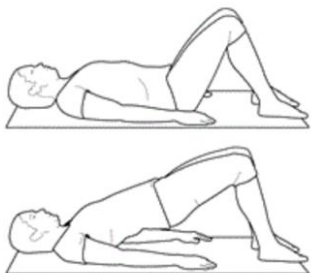


Leg Lift

On your hands and knees, hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Spine is in neutral position.

On breath out, extend one leg behind you. Engage your tummy muscles as you exhale. Lift only as high as you can control the position of your spine. Breathe in to your belly as you lower the leg.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week

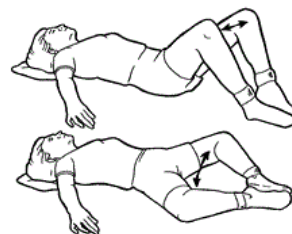


Bridge

Start by lying on your back with your legs bent. Feet are flat on the floor, and arms by your side. Engage your tummy muscles and pelvic floor.

Lift your bottom off the floor and straighten your hips. Return to the starting position.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week



Bent Knee Fall Outs

Lie on back with knees bent and feet together as shown. Tighten your tummy and allow one knee to move out to the side keeping both feet on the floor. Repeat on both sides.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week

EXERCISE PROGRAM

Stage 2: STRENGTHENING YOUR TUMMY MUSCLES

Heel Slides

Lie on your back with knees bent. Engage your tummy muscles and pelvic floor. Extend one leg away from