How do I do pelvic floor muscle exercises?

When you try this for the first time, find a quiet place so you can
concentrate on finding the correct muscles. Initially sit comfortably,
or lie down with your knees bent and follow these instructions.
To contract the muscle:

- Squeeze the muscles around the bowel opening (anus) as if you are trying to stop wind escaping, continue forward to tighten around
the walls of the vagina and the opening of the bladder (urethra). You can imagine you are closing up a zip from back to front.
- You should feel a squeeze and lift/a drawing up inside.

here are two types of exercises:

1. Long contractions

Try to pull up the pelvic floor muscles and hold for as long as you can, up to 10 seconds. Allow a few seconds for the muscles tocompletely relax after each contraction. Repeat 10 times.

2. Short contractions

Tighten the pelvic floor muscle quickly and strongly but do not hold the contraction. Allow a few seconds for the muscles to
completely relax and then tighten quickly again. Repeat as many times as you can, up to 10.
Do your long and short contractions 3 times every day. They can be done in any position. Once you feel able, try to do your exercises in standing at least once a day.

Remember!
When lifting the pelvic floor muscles:

- Breathe normally - try not to hold your breath. Counting out loud may help you with this.
- Do not push down.
- Try not to tighten your buttocks or your thighs.
- Do not bulge your tummy outwards, or pull it in strongly. Tighten your pelvic floor muscles before you cough, sneeze, laugh, jump or lift a heavy object. Also tighten the muscles if you are worried you may leak before you reach the toilet.

General activity and return to exercise

Even if you do not feel ready to exercise then keeping active will reduce the risks of blood clots, back pain and chest infections.
You can start gentle exercises as soon as you feel up to it. This could include walking, gentle stretches and pelvic floor exercises. If you have had a more complicated delivery, you can still start gentle pelvic floor muscle exercises, however, if you want to start high impact exercises such as aerobics or running, you may need to wait a little longer

Emotional wellbeing Baby blues

As with so many postpartum issues, the baby blues mostly comes down to hormones.
Symptoms are mild and usually pass within 10 to 14 days. Some emotions are normal but it is a good idea to note how you are feeling and seek help if you are worried.

You might feel:	What you can do:
Emotional	Breathing deeply can help
Irrational	Try to take some time out for you
Overwhelmed	Listen to your favourite music
Tearful (without knowing why)	Relax with a book
Irritable	Sleep when you get chance
Moody	Exercise
'Down'	Talk to a friend or relative
Anxious	Eat a well-balanced diet

Postnatal depression

Mental health problems are relatively common at a time of significant change in life. Depression and anxiety affect 15-20% of women in the first year after childbirth. It usually comes on within six weeks of giving birth although it can emerge up to a year after your baby is born

What are postnatal depression symptoms?

- Little interest or pleasure in doing things
- Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
- Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much
- Feeling tired or having little energy
- Poor appetite or overeating
- Feeling fidgety or restless
- Inability to concentrate
- Suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself.

Postpartum psychosis

Postpartum psychosis, which is also called puerperal psychosis,
is extremely rare. Only 1 or 2 mothers in 1,000 develop a severe psychiatric illness that requires medical or hospital treatment after the birth of a baby.
This illness can develop within hours of childbirth and is very serious, needing urgent attention. Other people usually notice it first as the mother often acts strangely. It is more likely to happen if you have a severe mental illness, a past history of severe mental illness or a family history of perinatal mental illness. Specialist mother and baby units can provide expert treatment without separating you from your baby.
Most women make a complete recovery, although this may take a few weeks or months.

Signs of potential postpartum psychosis

- Significant changes in mental health or emergence of new symptoms
- New thoughts or acts of violent self-harm
- New persistent expressions of incompetency as a mother or estrangement from the infant.

Postnatal post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Postnatal post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is often the result of a traumatic birth, such as a long or painful labour, or an emergency or problematic birth. It can also develop after other types of trauma, such as:

- A fear of dying or your baby dying
- Life-threatening situations

The symptoms can develop straight after the birth or months afterwards.
It's extremely important to talk to someone about how you're feeling.

Dads and partners
Dads and partners can also experience depression in the first year after birth.
First time parents are particularly vulnerable and it is estimated that around 1:10 will also become depressed during their partner's pregnancy. The peak time for postnatal depression in partners is three to six months after the birth.

DON'T HESSITATE TO CONTACT US
IF ANY CONCERNS YOU HAVE.
HAPPY PARENTING...

References: west Yolkshire and Harrogate NHS ,uk.



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Taking Your Baby Home

If you and your baby are well you will be discharged home as quickly as possible. Your post natal care will be discussed with you when you are discharged, but be assured that you will get the support and care you need from your maternity team.

What to expect	What you can do	What to seek help
Care of stitches and perineum		
You may experience discomfort or stinging especially in the first few days after giving birth , even if you do not have stitches .	Wash your hands before and after going to the toilet and change your sanitary pads regularly . Daily bathing or showering to keep the perineum clean. Cold treatments, such as crushed ice or gel pads. Analgesia - Paracetamol.	Pain or discomfort is worsening. Signs of infection (offensive smelling). Pain during intercourse.
Head ache		
You may experience mild headaches due to many factors, such as feeling tired, that is often relieved with analgesia or rest.	Analgesia such as Paracetamol. Rest and relaxation.	Headache that worsens when standing or sititng (if you have had a spinal or epidural). Other symptoms of pre-eclampsia (See page – 17)
Back ache		
This could be due to hormones , to how you have been laid during labour, poor posture.	Make sure you have good posture and support your back . Be careful how you lift objects.	If worsens and not relieved with analgesia. Other symptoms such as numbness or strange sensation in your legs.
Constipation		
It may be a couple of days before you have opened your bowels. Certain medications may cause constipation or loose stools.	Don't try and avoid going to the toilet, this may make it worse. Drink plenty of fluids. Eat fruit, vegetables and fibre. Gentle laxatives may be recommended (speak with your midwife).	If you have not opened your bowels for longer than 3 days or experiencing incontinence (no control over your bowels).
Piles (Haemorrhoids)		
These are lumps inside and around your bottom (anus). They may feel painful and / or itchy. Sometimes you may notice a small amount of fresh blood loss especially if straining when you open your bowels.	Drink lots of fluid and eat plenty of fibre to keep your poo soft. Take paracetamol if piles hurt. A warm bath may ease itching and pain. Use an ice pack wrapped in a towel to ease discomfort. Your pharmacist may recommend creams.	If you are experiencing severe, swollen or prolapsed haemorrhoid or any rectal bleeding.
After a Caesarean		
When you have had a caesarean section the outside skin edges of your wound should start to heal after about two days but the internal healing of muscle and other tissue below the surface go on for many months. It is normal to experience some discomfort that should gradually ease.	Take your regular analgesia. Follow the instructions regarding your dressing. Always wash your hands before touching. Keep the wound clean (showering is preferable to bathing). Do not rub soap, shower gels, or talc directly onto the wound. Pat he wound dry with a clean towel. Wear loose – fitting clothes to prevent rubbing.	You have more pain in the wound or your wound is getting worse and not relieved with pain killers. The wound is red, swollen or hot. Your wound has green or yellow weeping discharge. You have unpleasant/ offensive vaginal discharge. You feel feverish or have a high temperature.
Fatigue		
It is natural that you are going to feel more tired than usual as your body is recovering.	Eat a good balance diet. Take some gentle exercise. Take some time to relax . Ask friends, your partner or relatives to help	If you are on tablets for anaemia and have other symptoms (feeling dizzy and headaches). Feeling low in mood and experiencing trouble sleeping (see page 23).
Passing Urine		
You may be afraid to pass urine after birth especially if you have stitches in case it may sting. It is important that you do not stop yourself from passing urine.	Passing urine in the bath or shower. Drink plenty of water . Start your pelvic floor exercises.	You have no control (leaking or incontinence) Finding it difficult to pass urine (retention).

Health Concerns for Newly Birthed Mothers

It is vital that if you experience any of these you alert a health care professional.

Symptom	How this presents	What this could mean
Abnormal bleeding	Sudden heavy blood loss and signs of shock e.g. faintness, dizziness, rapid pulse or palpitations.	**Haemorrhage**
Feeling generally unwell	Fever, shivering, abdominal pain, offensive smelling discharge from wound or birth canal.	**Sepsis**
Headache	Normally presents with one of the following symptoms: changes in vision, nausea and vomiting, heart burn type pain or unable to tolerate light.	**Pre-eclampsia/ eclampsia/pregnancy induced hypertension**
Leg pain	Pain, swelling or redness in the calf	**Blood clot (deep vein thrombosis)**
Breathing problems	Difficulties in breathing, short of breath or chest pain.	**Blood clot (Pulmonary embolism)**
Breast redness	Tenderness, high temperature, red area	**Mastitis**
Low iron levels	Persistent tiredness, dizziness, tingling in fingers and toes.	**Anaemia**
What this could mean	Fever, heavy bleeding, abdominal cramps, smelly discharge	**Retained products of conception**

Pelvic floor muscle exercises

The pelvic floor, as its name suggests, is the floor of the pelvis.
It is layers of muscle, rather like a hammock which is attached at the front to your pubic bone, and at the back to the bottom end of your spine (coccyx).

What do the pelvic floor muscles do?

- They support the pelvic organs - the bladder, uterus and bowel -
- They work to keep the bladder opening (urethra) and bowel
- They relax to allow easy bladder and bowel emptying.
- They can improve vaginal sensation and orgasm during sex.
- They are important in supporting good posture by working together with abdominal and spinal muscles.

What weakens the pelvic floor muscle?

- Pregnancy and child birth
- Hormonal changes during the menopause and whilst you are pre-menstrual
- Long term constipation
- Chronic cough/smoking
- Being overweight
- Being generally unfit
- Heavy lifting
- Pelvic surgery
- Some medical conditions

Pelvic Floor Muscles should be kept strong and active just like any other muscle in your body.