



Mighty *MOM*

The Mighty MOD



Your complete guide to the most common modifications during postpartum recovery (or any other time)



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Why Should I Modify?

Ok, let's start at the beginning. **You just had a baby. You are a freaking rock star!** (thunderous applause). Giving birth is a **MARATHON!!** Your body has gone through so many changes, it is impossible to list them all here. Your whole abdominal wall has been stretched out, hips and pelvis has widened, your pelvic floor has undergone a magnitude of pressure (yes, even if you've had a C birth) and you have to take time to recover.

A Postpartum body is a Beginner BODY!

It is not the same body that you had on the day you conceived. You will not be able to pick up where you left off. It was a journey to get where you are and it will be a journey to get to where you are going. You simply cannot jump back in to your lifting/running/boot camp workouts as they were **BEFORE** pregnancy.

You need a plan. You need a strategy that respects the body you have now so eventually you will be able to get stronger than ever.

Modifications are not a sign of weakness. They are tools to help you gradually and consistently build up your level of fitness so you can become the best version of the body you have **TODAY**.

This guide is not only going to show you **HOW** to modify but **WHEN** you need to modify in order to prevent injury and increase your performance.

Happy Reading!

Jessica



Before You Start...



Your body just went through a very traumatic event! You have to let your body heal. Even at 6 weeks, your soft tissues are really only 75% healed. Your doctor may have given you the 'OK' to start exercising but please focus on rest and relaxation for this very special time in your life. 6 weeks may not be enough time for your body to be 'ready'. For those of you who have had a Caesarian Birth, 8-10 weeks is an appropriate amount of time to heal from this extensive surgery.

It is also a very good idea to see a Pelvic Floor Physio to assess and help you rehab the inner muscles of your core BEFORE you start an exercise training program.

One Thing You Can Do!!!



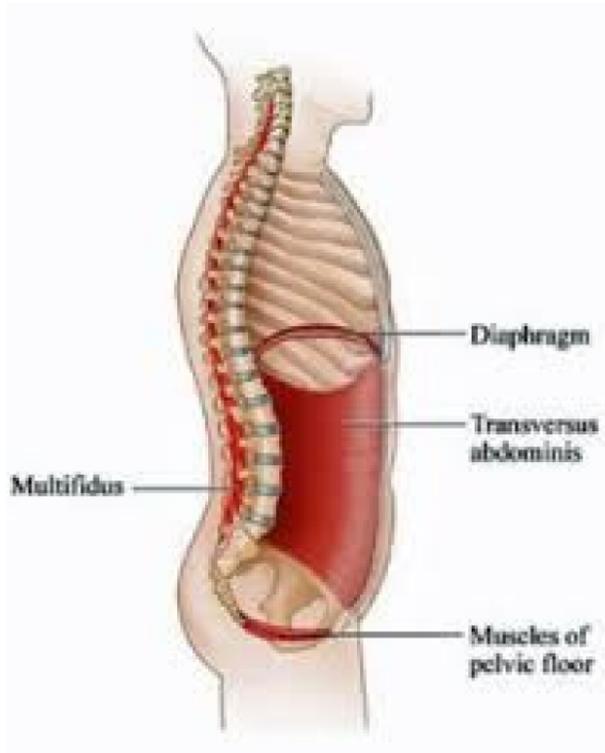

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BREATHE!! Yep. Just learning to breathe can help your recovery! You can start to activate the muscles of the inner core unit as soon as days after you give birth. These muscles have been compromised during your pregnancy and learning to engage and relax them will help speed up your recovery and set you up for success in the healing process. Go to the next page to learning all about CORE BREATHING!!

Before we get into HOW to breathe, let's learn which muscles are involved and why breathing can be so important for your postpartum workouts.

The Anatomy

Your inner core unit provides the structure and support for your ENTIRE body. There is an ANTICIPATORY CONTRACTION that happens whenever you move any part of your body or perform an exercise. Ex. When you raise your arm over your head, your core muscles will contract slightly BEFORE this movement to provide internal support. Cool right? There are 4 muscles of your inner CORE.



DIAPHRAGM

Primary Breathing Muscle - Sits like an umbrella under your ribs - Contracts DOWN when you INHALE

TRANSVERSE ABDOMINUS(TA)

Deep Abdominal Muscle - Wraps like a corset along lower part of your abdomen - provides structure and support

PELVIC FLOOR

Diamond shaped sling of muscles that connect to your pubic bone in the front and your tailbone in the back - has many functions including supporting the weight of your internal organs, sexual function, sphincteric (poo and pee) and many more.

MULTIFIDUS

Deep muscle that runs along the inside of the spine provides support and structure for your spine



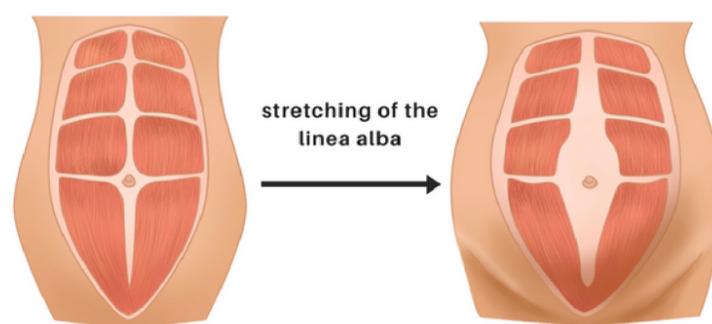
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What We Know...

The muscles of your inner CORE (Diaphragm, Transverse Abdominus, Pelvic Floor and Multifidus) all work together as one cohesive unit. When one muscle is compromised, the whole system cannot function properly. Think about a soda can - it's super strong even when it's empty BUT as soon as you dent one side, it crumbles right down to nothing.

Internal Abdominal Pressure (IAP)

As you breathe, your inner core unit works as a pressurized system. This is what provides the support you need to move your body in different ways and protect against injury. When you learn to engage your core, you are managing the internal pressure vs the external pressure. There are many ways to know if you are engaging these muscles properly. If you start to experience any signs and symptoms to suggest that there is a mismanagement of pressure and you need to modify.



Engage to Create Tension

When you engage your TA and your Pelvic Floor - you create tension in muscles which creates tension in the tissues of the abdominal wall. Tension in the tissues such as the LINEA ALBA (the connective tissue between the ridges of the Rectus Abdominus) help maintain a stiffer abdominal wall. A stiffer abdominal wall will help manage the IAP within your system and allow you to perform higher intensity exercises!

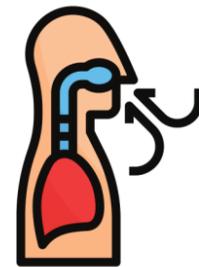
This is a picture of a Diastasis Recti (thinning of the LINEA ALBA) during pregnancy. In postpartum healing, it is essential to learn how to engage your core properly so you can promote effective healing during your postpartum recovery. This concept is directly related to how much you need to modify in your workouts.

**Learning how to breathe is first step in
modifying your workouts!**

**It's time to learn how to BREATHE with your
DIAPHRAGM and ENGAGE Pelvic Floor!**

INHALE → **RELAXATION**

- Diaphragm contracts down
- TVA will RELAX and move away from the body
- Pelvic Floor releases and lowers down

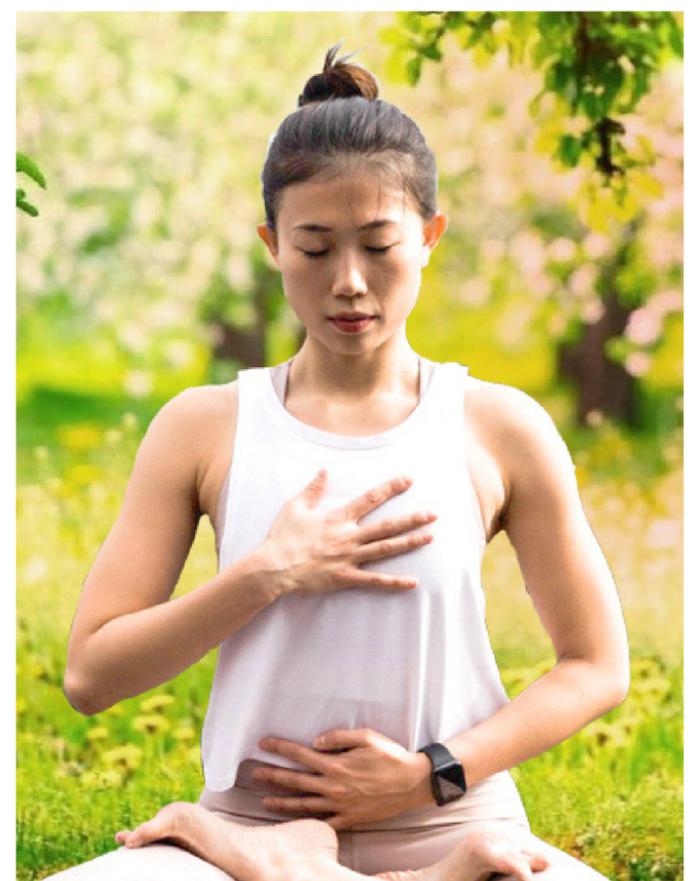


EXHALE → **CONTRACTION**

- Pelvic Floor lifts and engages up towards the body (like 'kegel' but throughout the ENTIRE Pelvic Floor)
- TVA contracts and pulls in (think like a corset tightening around the lower abdomen)
- Diaphragm moves up
- CUE: "Belly Button" up and in towards your ribs

Breathing Tips

- Put your hands on your belly and/or on your chest - aim to have the MOST movement in your belly as you inhale
- Lie on your Back to start - it can be easier to feel movement in your belly when you stop the movement in your chest and shoulders
- Practice!!! This is a new technique and it takes time to get it right!
- Try your CORE BREATHING in many different positions.
- Don't worry if you mess it up - it happens - just reset and start again
- Don't hold your breath!!!



Plank Position

Learning how to modify in any Plank Position Exercise is DIRECTLY related to how well you can manage the pressure in your core. Once you have mastered your CORE BREATHING, you can start in a position that puts the LEAST amount of pressure on the CORE system





Start with a **WALL** position and then move throughout each height when you are ready to progress!

Start with a plank position that is elevated up on a wall or counter height. The more of an incline your body is on, the less you have to work AGAINST gravity to manage the pressure. Ask yourself these questions:

Am I having trouble fully engaging and relaxing my core?

Do I feel pain, pressure in back or pelvic floor

Do I leak urine or have urgency to pee?

Am I struggling to maintain good form throughout the entire exercise?

Does this exercise feel too hard?

Do I see a 'doming' or 'coning' along the midline of my abdomen? This is just a visual representation of the pressure trying to escape

If the answer is NO for all of these questions, it is time to progress to a more challenging position.



Remember: These guidelines apply for ANY exercise that is performed in a plank position. Example: Push Ups, Mountain Climbers etc

No Bench? You can also perform plank position from your knees. Remember to keep your hips in line with your shoulders




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Jump Jump

When can I get back to all those high intensity exercises like jump squats, burpees, lunge jumps etc?

Running and jumping puts an extreme amount of pressure on your pelvic floor and whole core system. It is also a very quick movement which makes it very hard to properly use your CORE BREATHING to manage the pressure as you perform the exercise.

I do NOT recommend adding plyometrics into your workout until at least 3 months postpartum to let your body fully heal. Since there are MANY types of plyometric exercises, let's use the example of Squats to Jump Squats and you can use this system to modify any other jump you come across in your workouts.



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Squats to Squat Jumps?

1. BODY WEIGHT SQUATS

Start here and make sure you can connect to your core breathing. When you are ready, you can add weight to your squat by holding Barbells or Dumbbells. Work with a postpartum fitness professional to help you progress for strength.

Ask yourself these questions:

Am I having trouble fully engaging and relaxing my core?

Do I feel pain, pressure in back or pelvic floor

Do I leak urine or have urgency to pee?

Am I struggling to maintain good form throughout the entire exercise?

Does this exercise feel too hard?

Do I see a 'doming' or 'coning' along the midline of my abdomen? This is just a visual representation of the pressure trying to escape?



If the answer is NO for all of these questions, it is time to move on to a more challenging progression.

2. SQUAT TO CALF RAISE

You are ready for a more powerful movement but not ready to leave the ground just yet.

Perform your squat as normal but press off the ground with momentum and drive and lift heels off the ground to a calf raise at the top of the movement. Stick with this exercise until you are ready to progress

3. SQUAT JUMPS

It is time to try a few and get off the ground! Remember to breath through your reps and always land in a deep squat. If these reps feel good and you have no symptoms, you can start to add some more plyometrics into your workouts.

Remember! If you experience pain, pressure on your pelvic floor, leaking or any other troubling symptoms, simply pull back on your intensity and build back up to the jumps when you can. Everyone progresses at their own individual pace.



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Everything else!

Sore Wrists? Yeah Me TOO!



Having sore wrists is extremely common in early postpartum due to increased usage holding the baby all the time. Also known as De Quervain's Tenosynovitis.

- Stretch and Rest - See a Physiotherapist to suggest some useful stretches and try to REST as much as possible
- Hold dumbbells in a plank position. This simple trick can alleviate pressure on your wrist.
- Strengthen - use moves like carries and upper body strength exercises to strengthen the extensor muscles of the wrist.

Some Considerations...

- If you need help with your rehab, make an appointment with a Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist. An internal assessment can help determine how your muscles are functioning and if any guidance or care is needed
- There is no schedule for progression - everyone is on their own journey!
- You can always modify again. Try a few reps and see what happens. You can always try again. Nothing is set in stone.
- Never exercise through pain. Ever.

For other issues such as low back pain or knee pain. Always start with your Core Breathing! Activating your deep core will always allow your body to function in a more optimal way. Perform movements that feel good in your body until you can progress to other exercises. If pain persists, see a medical professional that can help you with the healing process.




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One Last Thing...

There are many ways to modify your workouts.

If you need specific suggestions or more info on modifications, work with a postpartum fitness specialist to help guide you through this process.

OR...

CHECK OUT NEW MOM TO MIGHTY STRONG

Want a program that has your postpartum modifications built right in so you don't have to think about it?



What about a program that will help you feel strong and comfortable in your own skin?

New Mom -to- Mighty Strong.

New Mom to Mighty Strong is my home workout program that is designed for you! It is a progressive program that will take you from a beginner having just had a baby or a long break from exercise to an advanced level of fitness.

What's included:

- Client Profile in TRUECOACH App - specifically designed for client/trainer communication
- Accountability Emails to keep you motivated
- 20-30 min Full Body Workouts delivered 3x a week through email/app
- Workouts include most common Postpartum Modifications and Progressions to challenge all exercise abilities
- Detailed Instructions with Exercise Videos for EVERY exercise
- Choice of Body Weight/Mini Bands OR Dumbbells/Mini Bands Programming
- Postpartum CORE BREATHING DEMO and ACTIVATION Video Content accompanying all programming
- Facebook Group Support for questions from a Mighty Mom Trainer

Want to be the first to know when this programs starts? Sign up for the waitlist on MIGHTYMOM.CA/postpartum-program to know when registration opens and get amazing discounts!