

# After Your Cesarean Birth: What You Can Do

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## How to move more easily:

- **Support your incision.** Use a small pillow or hands when coughing, sneezing, laughing or moving.
- **Get in and out of bed from your side.** This causes less strain on your stitches and your lower back.
- **Move around in bed or walk within your room.** You will have fewer aches and less stiffness. This will also help your bowels to move.
- **Stand and walk tall.**
- **Keep your legs and feet elevated** on the bed or footstool. This will help control the swelling in your feet and legs.
- **Avoid heavy housework** and lifting anything heavier than your newborn for the next 4-6 weeks.

## Exercise Program:

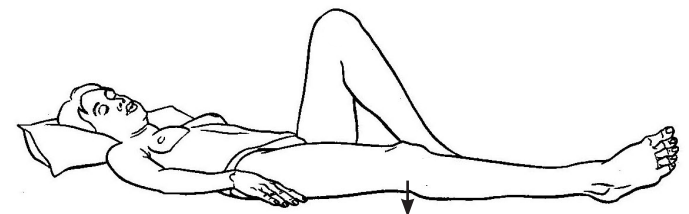
- Start the following exercises right after your surgery.
- Do them morning, afternoon and evening.
- Come to the Postpartum Physiotherapy Class before you go home (see back page).

### Exercises 1 and 2 help to:

- open up your lungs
- get the blood moving in your legs.

## 1. Deep Breathing

Breathe in and feel your ribs expand at your sides and back. Then breathe out slowly. Do this 2 times. Use a small pillow or towel to support your incision if it is painful.



## 2. Foot and Leg Exercises

Do these next 4 exercises with your legs straight and resting on the bed.

Do them 5 to 10 times with each leg.

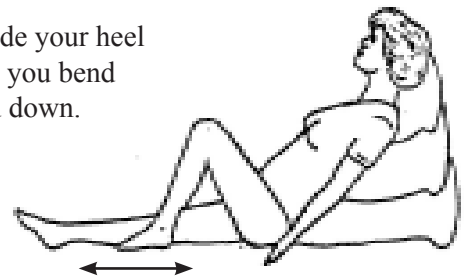
**Ankle Pumps:** bend and stretch your feet at the ankles (feel a stretch behind your calf)



**Foot Circles:** circle your feet at the ankles. Repeat in the other direction.



**Heel Slides:** slide your heel along the bed as you bend one knee up and down.



**Quad sets:** with your leg straight, press the back of your knee into the bed to tighten your thigh muscle.

Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.

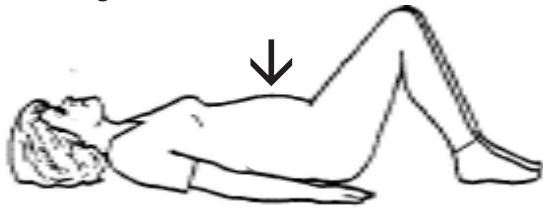
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### Exercises 3 and 4 are important for:

- Back comfort and posture
- Stronger tummy muscles
- Passing gas

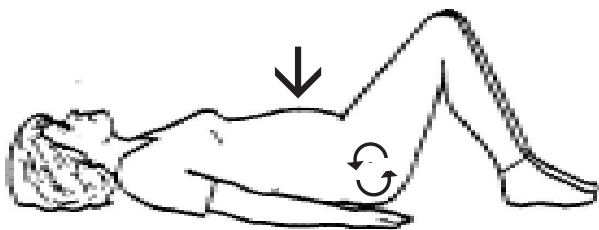
### 3. Tummy Tucks (Deep Stomach Muscle Exercise)

As you breathe out, tighten your tummy muscles below your belly button (just like you would if you were putting on a tight pair of pants). Hold for a few seconds, while continuing to breathe, then relax. Practice tummy tightening when you are lying, sitting and standing.



### 4. Pelvic Tilt

Tighten your tummy muscles (as above) and tuck your seat under to flatten your lower back on the bed. Hold for 5 seconds, while continuing to breathe. Relax and feel the curve return. Try this exercise on your side when it is comfortable.



### Exercise 5 improves:

- Bowel and bladder control
- Support for your pelvic organs
- Overall core muscle strength

### 5. Pelvic Floor Exercises (Kegels)

Begin this exercise **after** the catheter is removed.

**Hold'ems:** Pull up and tighten inside as if to stop yourself from passing urine and gas. Hold for a slow count of 5. Relax completely. Rest 10 seconds before trying your next one. Repeat 5 times. When this becomes easy, hold longer and do more.

**Speed'ems:** Tighten the pelvic floor muscles quickly and strongly. Hold only for 1 or 2 counts. Relax completely. Repeat 5 times. This exercise is important to help stop leakage when you cough, sneeze or lift.

### Postpartum Physiotherapy Class

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Monday, Wednesday or Friday

Room 2N41B  
(opposite Balsam Square)

### *This free one hour class will show you:*

- how to care for your back
- good postures while caring for your newborn
- how to begin early postpartum exercises safely

This is **not** an exercise class.

Please come as you are and your newborn is welcome in cot or carrier.

### *Plan to attend one class:*

- prior to going home
- anytime after going home during the 6 weeks postpartum time
- phone 604-875-2126 to register if attending after going home