

Congratulations! Time To Learn More About...

Postnatal Exercise



GET TO THE CORE OF THE PROBLEM!

Think of the CORE as the first string on a team. When there is an injury, the inherent control of these muscles is altered and TEAM CORE is benched. The coach, or the brain, sends the second string team into the game, but the team struggles until TEAM CORE is back in the game. The problem is, TEAM CORE does not receive the proper rehab and becomes so frustrated that it stays home from the game and gives up hope of ever returning. Sound familiar? **The reason your CORE is not functioning optimally is NOT YOUR FAULT!** You most likely did not receive the help you needed *at the time your core was disrupted*; during and after pregnancy, surgery or trauma sustained during falls, injuries or playing sports. This is a very predictable pattern. The good news is that there is also a predictable pattern of recovery once inflammation, pain and movement loss is addressed.

THREE STEPS TO A HEALTHY CORE

1. **REDUCE INFLAMMATION AND PAIN** - Swelling is a natural response to protect tissues from harm, however chronic inflammation can compress blood vessels, nerves and muscles. Inflammation in the gut from the Standard American Diet (SAD) inhibits muscle function through the *viscerosomatic reflex*. Imagine tightening your abdominal muscles or fitting into tight pants when you are bloated or in pain. Constipation and voiding dysfunctions contributes further to abnormal muscle patterns. The pelvic floor muscles are designed to relax during urination (peeing) and defecation (pooping), but do the opposite when there is pelvic floor dysfunction. You will learn from our expertise how to reduce inflammation and abnormal muscle tension by getting to the *source* of the problem.

2. **RESTORE MOBILITY** - Tightness in the hips or upper back (thoracic spine) can challenge the deep core muscles. In order for the lumbar spine (lower spine) to be stabilized by the core, the segments above and below it must be mobile. In many individuals with CORE issues, the opposite occurs. The hips and upper back are tight and the lumbopelvic region is weak. This can contribute to a vicious cycle of pain and dysfunction within the pelvis. In addition, the deep hip rotator muscles attach to the pelvic floor like the ends of a hammock and can affect muscle tension and joint alignment. Imagine pulling a hammock from one side (hip tension on one side) or from both sides to make it taut. You can learn to use this to your advantage by both releasing tension in the pelvic floor and activating the pelvic floor muscles through hip rotation.

Adhesions are also a factor when it comes to CORE muscle dysfunction, affecting the mobility of muscles, nerves, organs and blood vessels. Adhesions occur when the brain holds the connective tissue tight in order to protect what lies under the surface such as organs. Adhesions can occur after surgery, injury or trauma.

Muscles function optimally when you learn how to *lengthen before you strengthen*. In other words, mobility needs to be restored before the core can function properly. You will learn from our experience how to restore normal connective tissue tension in order to improve movement.

3. **RETRAIN CORE FUNCTION** - The deep core is a team of four muscles that work together, or synergistically. You will be instructed in many ways to engage the deep core muscles using your breath. You will learn how to lengthen muscles on the INHALE so your core muscles can contract on the EXHALE. You will learn yoga and Pilates principles to encourage tight muscles to relax and weak muscles to contract. In addition to the deep core muscles, you will be instructed in exercises to strengthen your legs and buttocks muscles, including your gluteus maximus, the largest muscle in your body. You will learn how to downtrain "helper" muscles including the tongue, the strongest muscle in your body, in order to get the correct muscles working for you. At Healthy Core, we give you the tools you need to restore core function, even if it has been several years since you had a baby, surgery or injury.

MYTHS AND FACTS about Postpartum Recovery

Sit-ups or crunches are the best exercises to strengthen the abdominals. **FALSE**

- Doing sit-ups or crunches increases the lower belly pouch, contributes to pelvic organ prolapse and worsens back pain or a diastasis recti (midline split of the abdominal muscles) if performed too early on in the recovery process. In addition, the pelvic floor muscles were not designed to withstand repetitive downward pressure. We are able to help you retrain the core to be able to perform these exercises correctly and in a safe manner.

The postpartum period is a great time to exercise. **TRUE**

- The training effects gained during pregnancy can last up to six months postpartum. These physiological changes include an enlarged heart and increased blood flow, helping with endurance and efficiency of muscle strengthening.

Some urinary leaking is normal. **FALSE**

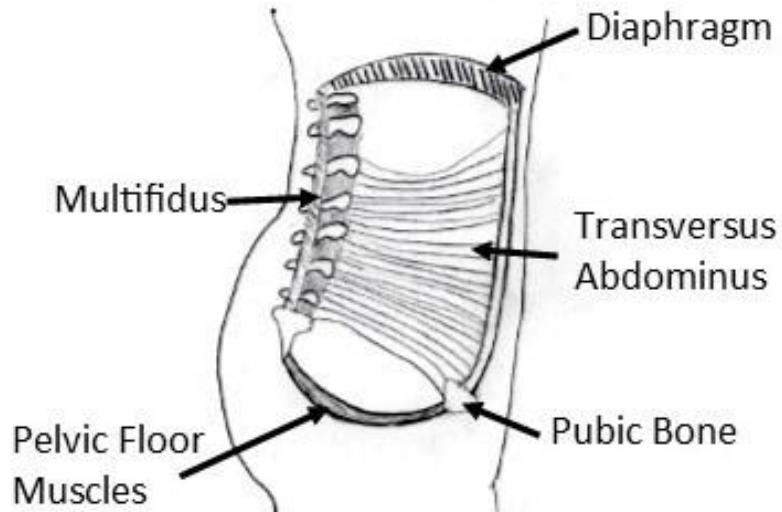
- Leaking is NEVER normal and often indicates a medical issue or a disruption in the core. A small drop can lead to a bigger problem if not addressed during this time.

Kegels help urinary leaking. **TRUE**

- However the pelvic floor muscles are most likely tight from pregnancy and delivery and may need to be lengthened or stretched first. "Reverse" Kegels may need to be done initially in order for Kegels to be more effective. Performing kegels when the pelvic floor muscles are tight can lead to more dysfunction, so it's best to be assessed by a pelvic floor physical therapist first.

Running or jogging is the best exercise to get back in shape. **FALSE**

- Ligamentous laxity (loose ligaments) from the hormones in pregnancy and fluctuations each month increase the risk for injury or compensations to occur. In addition, the core musculature has been disrupted and needs to be retrained first before beginning any impact exercise.



Rehabilitation should focus on all four DEEP CORE muscles in addition to retraining the GLUTES (buttocks), restoring NORMAL BREATHING patterns and increasing HIP RANGE OF MOTION to provide a fascial lift for the pelvic floor.

BONUS: BLADDER and BOWEL TIPS

In addition to getting to the bottom of your problem, we will empower you in ways to improve bladder and bowel function, as well as sexual function. This can prevent symptoms from returning and give you life-long skills for a healthy core. Here are a few things you will learn:

1. EXHALE to activate your core with lifting and exercise. For example, when you get out of a chair or lift anything, blow out and exhale at the start of the movement. "BLOW AS YOU GO."
2. Don't go to the bathroom "JUST IN CASE" which trains your bladder to hold less urine. Try spacing out your trips to the bathroom instead.
3. Stop and breathe deeply if you experience urinary urgency. Urges come in waves and will dissipate often within 30 seconds. Do not hurry or rush to the bathroom

during the urge. You can also try briskly rubbing your hands together for 30 seconds to reduce the fight or flight response.

4. Avoid constipation by consuming enough water to keep your urine diluted and by consuming fiber. You will also learn how to massage your abdomen to promote gut motility and how to relax your pelvic floor by relaxing the tongue or glottis that is connected to your pelvic floor.
5. Move your body. Regular exercise can balance your blood sugar, maintain a healthy weight and reduce muscle tension throughout your body. "MOTION IS LOTION."

EXTRA BONUS TIP: SEX!

We want you to thrive in every area of your life, including your sex life! Intimacy doesn't have to be affected by pelvic floor dysfunction. Muscles cannot contract properly if they are shortened by muscle knots or myofascial trigger points. You will learn how to identify what is restricting muscle movement and get to the bottom of the problem, literally. This allows the muscles to function as they were designed to, improving sensation and the ability to climax. You will learn how to take deep *diaphragm breaths*, known as *reverse Kegels*, and how to be a master of your pelvic floor when you complete this program!

COMMON PROBLEMS RELATED TO CORE DYSFUNCTION

It is not uncommon to have more than one symptom related to core muscle dysfunction.

These are the most common complaints related to core muscle dysfunction:

- Back pain, hip pain, knee pain or foot pain
- Diastasis recti (midline split of rectus abdominal muscles)
- Pelvic floor dysfunction
- Pelvic pain (abdominal pain, menstrual cramps, pain with penetration/ intimacy)
- Pelvic organ prolapse (bladder, bowel, uterus and/or urethra)

- Sacroiliac (SI) joint dysfunction, pelvic girdle pain (PGP)
- Urinary incontinence, urinary urgency, urinary frequency (going to the bathroom more than eight times in a 24-hour period) or nocturia (waking at night to void)

In conclusion, if you are avoiding social activities, exercise or intimacy for fear of not being in control of your symptoms, it is time to seek help from an expert who can solve your problem. Even if you have had this problem for several years, as long as there are normal nerve connections from your brain, the CORE muscles can be retrained.