

Exercises in pregnancy

When doing these exercises, a small amount of discomfort could be expected but if they aggravate your symptoms please stop. Please do not push into pain.

1. Transverse abdominal exercise



You can do this exercise lying down as described above, or sitting on a chair with both feet on the floor.

- Lie down on your back with your knees bent. Use pillows or folded blankets/towels under your head and shoulders to ensure that you are on an incline and not lying flat.
- Take a gentle breath in, and, as you breathe out, gently draw the lower stomach muscles in towards the spine.
- Maintain that position, with the muscles activated for five seconds (keep the breath flowing), and then release.
- Aim to repeat 6-8 times per session.

2. Pelvic tilting



- Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the bed/floor. Again, use pillows or folded blankets/towels under your head and shoulders to ensure that you are not lying flat.
- Activate your stomach muscles, as in the exercise above, and press the small of your back against the supporting surface. Your pelvis should tilt backwards as your lower back presses against the bed. Hold this for up to 5 seconds (keep the breath flowing), and then release and relax back to neutral/starting position. Aim to repeat this 6-8 times per session.

Remember: You can also do this sitting or standing.

3. Cat and cow stretch



Position yourself on hands and knees with your back and head in a straight line. Relax the abdominal muscles fully. Round your back into an arch towards the ceiling and gently reverse allowing the back to hollow slightly. Repeat the exercise 5-10 times, little and often.

4. Crawling position/ Childs pose



Start on your hands and knees, separate your knees as wide as is comfortable (be careful with this exercise not to widen the knees too far if you have pain over the pubic bone at the front of your pelvis. You can place a pillow under your tummy for comfort).

Move your bottom towards your heels, and feel a gently stretch in your back. To deepen the stretch you can gently slide your arms forwards or lower on your forearms, elbows on the floor. Breathe out while doing the exercise. You can hold this pose for up to 1 min. Repeat up to 3 times.

5. Static glutes



Activate your glutes (squeeze your buttocks). Hold 5 seconds and repeat 5-10 times. You can do this in any position.

6. Glute/piriformis Stretch



Sit on a chair with feet on the floor. Lift one foot onto your opposite thigh. Gently lean forward. Feel the stretch in your buttock. Hold for 15-20 seconds. Repeat up to 3 times.

7. Hip Abduction



Lay on your side with your lower leg bent at the knee and top leg straight. As you breathe out, activate your stomach muscles as above (see Ex. 1) and lift your top leg up towards the ceiling. (Take care with this exercises NOT to lift your leg too far, the pelvic should remain still and NOT rock backwards). Hold 2-3 seconds and then lower back down. Repeat up to 5-10 times.

8. Clam



Lay on your side with both legs bent. As you exhale activate your stomach muscles (see Ex 1 above) and, keeping your feet together and on the supporting surface. Lift your top knee towards the ceiling keeping your feet together. Take care with this exercise NOT to lift the knee too far, the pelvis should remain still and NOT rock backwards. Hold 1-2 seconds and then lower the knee back down.

Repeat up to 10 times and up to 3 sets, as able.

9. Standing hip abduction



Stand tall and take support if needed.

Activate your glutes (squeeze your buttocks) and lift your leg sideways, keeping the toes pointing forward and then lower the leg with control. When doing this exercise keep the trunk straight, do not bend the upper body when lifting the leg. Repeat up to 10 times and up to 3 sets, as able.

10. Neural Glides



Start in a seated position, sitting tall and looking forwards. Slide the foot along the floor and straighten your leg while pointing your toes down towards the floor. Then bend the knee and slide the foot back to the starting position.

Do not push into pain. Repeat for 30 seconds little and often.

11. Mini Squats



Start standing tall. Step your feet a little wider than hip width and toes pointing forwards.

Bend your knees whilst squatting (sticking your bottom out as though to sit in a chair). At the same time extend your arms in front of you. Take care that the knees are in-line with the second toe, but do not go forward over the toes.

Activate your glutes (squeeze your bottom cheeks) and return to standing position. Repeat this up to 5-10 times and aim to do 3 sets of 10, as able. You can do this holding onto a chair if needed.

12. Postural chest stretch



Sit on a chair. Place your arms behind your body, as in the picture, keeping the elbows straight.

Feel the shoulder blades drawing together and feel an opening across your chest. Keep your shoulders down and relaxed

Hold 15-20 seconds and repeat up to 3 times.

13. Trunk Control in Four Point Kneeling, Arm Lift



On your hands and knees, hands under your shoulders and knees in-line with your hips. Spine lengthened; neck is long and look towards the floor.

As you exhale, activate your stomach muscles (see Ex 1 for technique) lift one arm forwards to shoulder height. You may hold this for up to 5 seconds and then lower the arm back down to the starting position.

Note: keep the neck long throughout this exercise and try not to shift your weight to the side or to shift your bottom back.

Repeat up to 10 times, alternating arms.

14. Seated side stretch



In sitting. Place the left hand down at your side; hold onto the seat of your chair if possible. Reach your right hand up towards the ceiling and bend your upper body to the left. Hold for 15-20 seconds and return to start position.

Repeat up to 3 times on each side.

Note: try to make the stretch equal on both sides but do not force the movement as this can increase pain.