Physiotherapy Advice for Caesarean Section Recovery
Women’s Health

We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.

To use the Text Relay service, prefix all numbers with 18802.

Patient Information

Ashford Hospital
London Road
Ashford, Middlesex
TW15 3AA
Tel: 01784 884488

St. Peter’s Hospital
Guildford Road
Chertsey, Surrey
KT16 0PZ
Tel: 01932 872000

Website: www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk

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Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email pals@asph.nhs.uk. If you still remain concerned please contact our Complaints Manager on 01932 722612 or email complaints@asph.nhs.uk.
Physiotherapy Advice for Caesarean Section Recovery

This booklet is only intended to support the advice given by your obstetric physiotherapist.

COMFORT AND RESTING POSITIONS

- Rest is as important as exercise to allow healing to occur. You cannot do your stitches any harm with normal movement. Listen to what your body is telling you.
- Lay on your side with a pillow between your knees and a small cushion supporting your tummy.
- Lay on your back with a pillow under your knees.
- When you turn over in bed bend up both knees, one at a time, support your tummy with your hand, a soft pillow or towelling pad if necessary. Turn your shoulders, hips and knees at the same time. This will avoid twisting your body.

GETTING IN AND OUT OF BED

Sit on the edge of the bed. Put your hand on the bed beside you. Slowly lower yourself down onto your elbow and then your shoulder.
Then swing both feet up sideways onto the bed. Slowly roll into position. To get out of bed, roll onto your side, push up onto your elbow and then your hand. Then swing both legs down so that you are sitting on the edge.

**SITTING AND FEEDING**

Make sure you have adequate support for your lower back when you are sitting. Support baby at breast height when you are feeding with cushions or pillows so that you do not have to slump forward.

Remember that you can lay on your side to feed.

**COUGHING AND SNEEZING**

It is important to keep your chest clear. You can do this by taking a deep breath to stretch your lungs. Do this 2 or 3 times an hour. Your tummy may be sore but try not to hold back a cough or sneeze as you cannot harm your stitches. To make it more comfortable take the stretch off your tummy by leaning forward or bending your knees up if you are in bed. Support your tummy with your hands or a small cushion or towel pad.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any concerns about your recovery please ask your community midwife, health visitor or GP to refer you to the Women’s Health physiotherapist.

Alternatively phone:
Ashford Hospital 01784 884484
St Peters Hospital 01932 722547

More information can be obtained from The Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women’s Health
[www.acpwh.org.uk](http://www.acpwh.org.uk)

or the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
[www.rcog.org.uk](http://www.rcog.org.uk)
1. Bend alternate knees up to your tummy and down.
2. Let one knee roll a small way out to the side and back. Ensure your back and pelvis do not move. Repeat with the other leg. This may take some practice.
3. Slide one heel a small way down the bed or floor – bring it back up. Repeat with the other heel. Ensure your back and pelvis stays still.

**After 6 weeks**

Lay on your back with your knees bent up. Keep your waist flat on the bed by using the deep muscles then lift your head so that you look at your tummy. Hold this position for a few seconds and slowly relax down.

From 6 weeks you can return to any exercise or sport that you were doing before you became pregnant. Start as a beginner again and train up. It will not take as long as before but remember to listen to your body and go at your own pace.

**POSTURE**

Try and stand tall. Avoid twisting or bending for any length of time which could harm your back. When changing nappies try and put the baby on a surface that does not require you to bend over. Put the changing mat in the cot or on a purpose designed changing station.

**EXERCISES**

Do not expect too much too soon. Avoid any activities that make you feel as if you are straining. For the first few weeks do not lift anything heavier than your baby. Use walking as a way to increase your exercise tolerance.

**During the first few days**

Regularly take a few deep breaths and circle your ankles to make up for the decrease in normal activity.

**Day 1 onwards**

**Pelvic Floor Exercises**

Regular use of these muscles will help improve bladder and bowel control and prevent symptoms of prolapse. They will also aid return to sexual enjoyment.
Tighten and lift the muscles around the vagina and back passage as if you were trying to stop yourself passing urine or wind. If you have a urinary catheter wait until it is removed and you are passing urine normally.

Start by doing 5 contractions which last for 5 seconds – try and do this 5 times a day.

Use the same muscle to do 10 quick squeezes.

Don't worry if you can't manage this to start with; gradually increase the hold until you are able to manage five seconds. You can do this in any position which is comfortable and a variety of positions is good e.g. sitting, standing or lying.

Tighten the pelvic floor muscle before coughing or lifting.

These exercises are important to do for the rest of your life.

**Pelvic rocking**
Lay on your back with your knees bent up. Gently tuck your tail bone up by tightening your bottom and tummy muscles so that you flatten your waist into the bed. Relax so that the normal curve comes back into your back. When you are able to do this easily try it in other positions such as sitting, on all fours or standing.

**Deep Abdominal Muscles**
These muscles form a natural corset which is stretched and weakened during pregnancy.

Do this exercise in the most comfortable position for you – lying on your back or side with your knees bent or sitting with your back well supported.

Place one or both hands on your tummy below your umbilicus. Breathe in and as you breathe out gently draw your lower abdomen away from your hands towards your back, pull up your pelvic floor and then relax. As this exercise gets easier to do you will be able to breath or talk at the same time.

Once you have mastered this “core exercise” you can practise it when standing. To progress further hold the contraction for 3 seconds while continuing to breath or talk.

Use this muscle throughout the day particularly when doing any activity requiring effort e.g. lifting or changing the baby.

**Day 7 onwards**
Lay on your back with your knees bent up and your feet flat on the bed or floor at hip distance apart. Use pelvic rocking to ensure your waist is neither too flat nor arched away from the surface you are lying on. Tighten your pelvic floor muscle then do the following exercises.