

Did you just have a baby?  
Are you going to have a baby soon? Or are your kids walking and talking?

If you answered yes, to any of the above questions this article is for you!

Having a baby is no joke. It is a huge life and body changer. So, let's talk a little about how having a baby affects your body and how you can make adjustments to your everyday routine or workouts to promote a healthier and stronger you!



P.S. Peeing your pants when you work out or laugh is NOT normal. Strengthening your core and pelvic floor can help tremendously!

How having a baby changes your body: Hair loss, skin discoloration, breast changes, stomach changes, back pain, incontinence and constipation, vaginal pain and discharge, sweating and energy levels.

- After you have a baby be nice to yourself.
- Give yourself at LEAST six weeks to rest and recover.
- There should be NO rush to get back to crazy exercise.
- Listen to your body and follow the simple rules below to slowly ease your body into recovery and strengthening after baby.

### **What NOT to do after you have a baby:**

- Planks
- Heavy lifting
- Push-ups

\*These create too much pressure in the abdomen and strains your muscles. This could cause worsening of your diastasis recti.

## What you SHOULD DO after you have a baby:

- Kegels
- Bridges
- Abdominal Bracing

**Kegel:** a kegel is contracting your pelvic floor muscles. Your pelvic floor muscles act like a hammock to support your internal organs (bladder, uterus and rectum). Think about stopping the stream of urine or lifting your pelvic floor muscles up and in. Try not to hold your breath or squeeze your butt muscles. Now make sure you do not practice stopping the stream of urine to perform a pelvic floor contraction. You want to make sure you sit on the toilet seat and relax the pelvic floor muscles and empty your bladder completely each time you urinate.

Try to hold a kegel a long as you can. It may only be three seconds. That's okay! Hold your kegels for three seconds and perform 10-20 per day depending on what you are able to do.

**Bridging:** This is a great exercise for your glutes, hamstrings and core. Try performing a bridge with a kegel.

**Abdominal Bracing:** It is very important to learn how to activate your abdominals correctly. This is your core and will help keep you upright and stabilize your back to decrease low back pain.

- Think about flexing your abs (trying to make a 6-pack).
- Put your hands inside of your front hip bones and make a “shhhhhh” sound. You should immediately feel those muscles activate!



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Gina Valdez received her Doctor of Physical Therapy from University of St. Augustine in San Marcos. She has a certification as an Ergonomic Assessment Specialist. She specializes in treating musculoskeletal issues and pelvic floor dysfunctions. She is also a clinical instructor for University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. She works in Palomar Health Outpatient Rehabilitation in San Marcos, CA.