

# At Home Care and Helpful Hints

## Postural Advice

- Avoid hyperextension of the low back or slouching by instead standing tall with feet evenly planted, bottom tucked under and shoulders back
- Avoid one-sided positions such as carrying washing baskets on one hip, standing with uneven weight distribution.
- Also avoid repetitive motions and heavy lifting
- Do not carry older siblings where this can be avoided, particularly not on one hip
- Rock pelvis forward when sitting
- Use a pelvic support belt specific for pregnancy if pelvic instability is present
- Refrain from wearing high heels

## What can be done to avoid or minimize tearing?

Perineal massage can be performed twice a week from 30 weeks onwards to help prepare your body. This can be performed solo or with assistance from your partner. The "Epi-No" by Tecsana is a specific device that can be used from 37 weeks onwards to exercise the pelvic floor and stretch the birth canal. During a vaginal birth listen to the advice of your birthing assistants as to when to push and how hard.

## Stress Reduction

- Establish early in the pregnancy when you will be finishing work and stick to it
- Try prenatal yoga or meditation
- Spend quality time with your partner, family and friends, perhaps even consider a 'babymoon' and take some time out with your partner before the baby arrives.
- Rest when you need to, allow for adequate 'me' time.
- Surround yourself with images/books/people associated with natural birthing or positive birth experiences
- Consider enlisting the help of a doula to support you and your family through the birthing journey.

## Exercises

- Do not overdo exercises, particularly if you were relatively inactive prior to the pregnancy
- Keep your pelvic floor strong
- Get professional advice on specific exercises for a breech or posterior baby
- Avoid overheating, be sure to drink plenty of water and don't exercise in hot humid conditions.
- Stop exercising immediately and consult your doctor or midwife immediately if you are experiencing cramping, bleeding, severe joint pain, elevated blood pressure, fainting and/or dizziness during or after exercise.

## Factors that Influence Tearing

### The Six S'

- **S**tretchiness and elasticity of your body tissue
- **S**ize and position of your baby's head
- **S**trength of your contractions
- **S**peed of delivery and your position during delivery
- **S**carring from previous births
- **S**kill of your birthing attendant

## Why is Strengthening the Pelvic Floor Important?

### During Pregnancy and Birth

- The knowledge will allow you to relax these muscles during the crowning stage of labour to decrease tearing and allow the baby to pass through the birth canal
- Exercise increases blood flow which will increase healing post-birth
- This can decrease vulva varicosities and haemorrhoids during labour
- Helps prevent constipation

### After the Birth

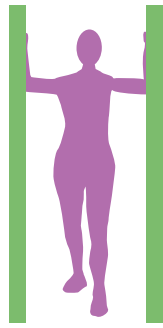
- To prevent or decrease symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction such as inability to control your bladder and frequent urination



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Please See Reverse for  
Helpful Exercises



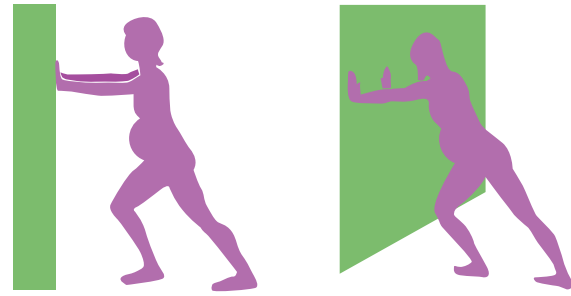
### Pectorals - Corner/Doorway

Facing corner or standing through a doorway.

Place forearms on each wall at shoulder height.

Slowly lean chest forward into corner, keeping upper body tall, to feel a stretch in the front of the chest.

**Tips:** Always exercise within your pain free range of motion. Discuss any specific needs with your health care practitioner as some modifications or additions may be required.



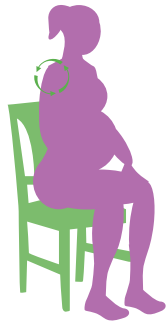
### Gastrocs - Wall

Standing in a lunge position, supporting upper body against wall.

Keeping back foot heel on floor and knee straight, bend front knee.

Shift body weight forward through pelvis to feel a stretch in the upper calf area.

**Tips:** Repeat with the knee of the back leg slightly bent. If you are getting lots of cramping in your legs during pregnancy speak to your practitioner about your magnesium and iron levels.

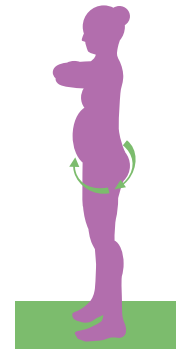


### Shoulder Circles

A great exercise for getting Side of tension which builds with postural changes. Sitting tall, shrug shoulders up, roll them backwards, down and then forwards.

Keep shoulders relaxed and repeat in opposite direction (clockwise/counterclockwise).

**Tips:** Keep those shoulders back and reverse that slouching.

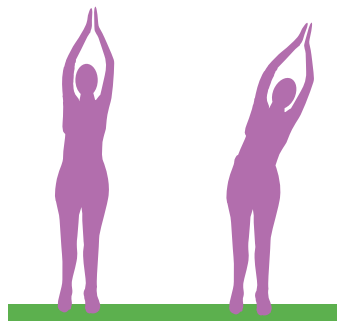


### Pelvic Tilt - Standing

Standing tall, suck stomach in and rock pelvis backward so as to flatten the low back.

Relax the stomach muscles and rock pelvis forward so as to poke the buttocks out and arch the low back.

**Tips:** Move within your pain free range of motion. This can be done seated or against a wall if you feel you need more support.



### 'Blown Palm' - Standing

Standing tall, place both hands straight up over head with palms together. Breath in and bend straight sideways. Hold, breath and return to upright. Repeat, bending to the opposite side.

**Tips:** Gentle rotations of the torso can also be performed at this point. Speak to your practitioner if you have been suffering low back pain. Always work within your pain free range of motion.



### Mid Back Arch - Quadruped

On all fours, let head relax down and maintain an abdominal hollow as you raise your spine up between the shoulder blades.

Let spine relax slowly down through the shoulder blades (this will create a "dipping down of the mid-back) and then repeat.

**Tips:** Hold the stretch and relax while breathing deeply.