



Physical Activity: Tips for Postpartum Moms

Are you feeling uncertain about becoming physically active after childbirth? It is safe to gradually resume physical activity, and it's one of the ways you can care for yourself.

When can I start being physically active after giving birth?

- Every person is different - there's no "gold standard" waiting period.
- If you had a healthy pregnancy and uncomplicated vaginal birth, you can resume gentle physical activity as soon as you feel ready.
- Check with your health care provider before becoming active if you:
 - Had any postpartum complications (such as heavy bleeding or sutures).
 - Delivered your baby by caesarean (C-section).

Why is postpartum physical activity important for me?

Being active can help to:

- Prevent postpartum depression and anxiety
- Boost mood and energy
- Promote bonding with baby
- Connect with others
- Strengthen heart, lungs, muscles, and bones
- Improve sleep quality



What are some activities I can do?

A few things you can try:

- Kegel exercises to strengthen pelvic floor muscles
- Walking with baby in a stroller, wrap, or carrier
- Gentle yoga and pilates
- Dancing while holding baby
- Swimming, once heavy bleeding has stopped



Postpartum self care (NESTS)

Practicing self care protects your spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being and your mental health. The acronym NESTS can help you remember what self care looks like.

N Nutrition – Eat foods that you enjoy, in amounts that are satisfying to you! Feed yourself regularly to get enough energy and nutrition.

E Exercise – Choose activities that you enjoy and can easily fit into your day. Active time should leave you feeling happy, not depleted. Aim for 150 minutes of physical activity per week, spread over at least 3 days, but remember that any amount is beneficial.

S Sleep – It may not always be possible to get as much sleep as you'd like, but try to rest when you can. Ask a trusted friend or family member to help with child care to free you up for a nap.

T Time – Try to set aside some time for yourself to do something to recharge (e.g. rest, read a book, take a walk).

S Support – Ask for support; you are not alone! Connect with family members, trusted friends, and your health care provider and tell them what you need.



Helpful tips

- Listen to your body and don't overdo it. Start small and slowly increase the level of activity over a few weeks. If you have a setback or an increase in bleeding, back off for a bit and resume again slowly when you're ready.
- Physical activity will not affect your breast milk supply; however, your baby may prefer to feed before you exercise.
- Contact a health care provider with any questions or concerns, or call 8-1-1 to speak to a qualified exercise professional at HealthLink BC.
- Contact a physiotherapist for strategies to maintain safe activity while managing activity-related pain, advice on pelvic floor health, and more.