

Welcome to ***Postpartum Track***

Welcome to **Sportsclub's p.r.e.p.** – your introduction to exercise and a healthier lifestyle. Your physician has identified you as someone who would benefit from instruction in a safe exercise program to help you recover from the effects of your pregnancy and prepare for the physical challenges of caring for a newborn. Regular exercise can help you achieve a safe and desirable postpartum weight, improve your energy, maintain your bone density while breast feeding, and decrease your chance of postpartum depression.

Our program is based on the guidelines proposed by the *American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology* and the *American College of Sports Medicine*. These guidelines apply to women who are breastfeeding as well as those who are not. It is recommended that postpartum women, when given clearance from their doctors, resume a program that includes aerobic conditioning, resistance training, and flexibility exercises. Cardio and flexibility training should be performed at least three days a week, but daily activity is preferable. Resistance training should involve all major muscle groups and should be performed twice per week.

There are a number of myths and misconceptions which, in the past, have prevented women from exercising after pregnancy:

MYTH: Exercise will impair milk production and compromise neonatal weight gain.

- There are no studies to support this claim. In fact, studies show that moderate weight reduction while nursing is safe and does not compromise neonatal growth.

MYTH: Ligament laxity persists after delivery and predisposes one to joint injury.

- While the physiologic effects of pregnancy, including joint laxity, often persist for 4 - 6 weeks after delivery, there is no evidence that demonstrates increased injury is related to this.
- Studies have shown that resistance training can reduce bone mineral density loss in nursing women.

MYTH: The energy expended during exercise will leave women (already tired and often sleep deprived) with insufficient energy to handle to duties of parenting.

- Studies have indicated that there is a subjective increase in energy associated with exercise, as well as a decreased incidence of postpartum depression.

Precautions

- The timing of return to exercise varies from individual to individual and is best determined by the physician who has followed you through your pregnancy.
- Even if you have exercised throughout your pregnancy, some degree of de-conditioning occurs. Your return to full exercise should be gradual, particularly where high-impact activities are involved.
- For nursing mothers, it is important to ensure that fluid and nutritional intake is adequate to balance training-induced losses. This will ensure that milk production and neonatal growth are not compromised due to activity.
- Nursing women should consider feeding infants before exercise in order to avoid the discomfort of engorged breasts.
- Nursing before exercise avoids the potential problem of increased acidity of milk related to any buildup of lactic acid.

It is important to recognize that exercise alone is only part of a complete lifestyle program. Proper nutrition is critical to re-establish your overall health and the health of your nursing child. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of our nutrition counseling and our nutrition education videos as part of your **p.r.e.p.** experience.

Congratulations on the birth of your child! We appreciate the opportunity to help you recover from your pregnancy and prepare you for wonderful, yet physically demanding, times ahead. Remember that our **p.r.e.p.** team is here to help and we encourage you to approach them with any questions or concerns. It is an amazing experience to care for and nurture the health of your newborn child. Thank you for allowing us to help you care for your own health as you embark on this incredible journey.