



WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER EXPECTING

BY ANDREA JERVINIS, ATC

Postpartum, also known as the fourth trimester, can be a difficult time for most women for many various reasons. The body has gone through a natural “trauma” delivering a baby (or multiple babies 🤰) and requires recovery. Some women Industrial Athletes may need to jump back to work as soon as possible. But, word to the wise, **do not expect it to be an easy and fast recovery.**

RECOVERY AND RETURN TO ACTIVITY

Recovery isn't always easy due to the lack of sleep, body aches and pains, breastfeeding, and hormone re-regulation that occurs. Generally, the postpartum period lasts 6-8 weeks. This time frame is how long a woman's body returns to “normal” physiologically, granted there were no major complications in pregnancy and delivery. At 6 weeks, the woman is examined by their OBGYN and given the green light to return to physical activity.



Yes, the doctor may say you're “back to normal,” but there are still some lingering side effects from pregnancy and delivery. In fact, some **scientists argue** the postpartum time frame should be extended to 1 year due to some physiological aspects taking this long to return to their pre-pregnancy state. In a study **only 51% of women** reported feeling they had their regular level of physical energy at 6 weeks. With that in mind, don't expect yourself to jump right back into your pre-pregnancy workout routines or lose the baby weight immediately. Instead, approach it gently and give yourself some grace - your body has gone (and continues to go) through A LOT.

POSTPARTUM EXERCISE

The sooner you begin exercising in the postpartum period, the better, especially to be **PREPARED** to return to work. Set aside some time for yourself to reap the benefits, including:

- increased energy levels
- more positive moods
- lower propensity for anxiety/depression
- reduced risk of heart disease and obesity

How to exercise in the postpartum period

- **Start Small** - begin with only 5-10 minutes of exercise and monitor how you feel. If it's going well, do it several times within a day. Then gradually increase the duration by adding another 5-10 minutes every other week.
- **Go for a Stroll** - put baby in the stroller and go for a walk around the neighborhood. You may find you won't get very far due to cramping and aches and pains, but starting with a leisurely walk is all you need. *Bonus - getting baby outside will help with their day and night confusion and get you more sleep!*
- **Buddy Workout** - get baby involved with your workout and use them as your resistance.



Exercise Ideas

- **Strengthening** - Leg Raise, Supine Heel Slides, Supine Toe Taps
- **Flexibility** - Glute Stretching, Supine Diaphragmatic Breathing, Pec Stretching, Back Extensions

Check out [this infographic](#) for exercise suggestions and directions!

MYTHBUSTED!

Exercising will **NOT** cause accumulation of lactic acid in breast milk or change milk volume if hydration is maintained.



Work Right NW is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialist's in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.



Andrea Jervinis, ATC, LAT || Andrea is a Reno, NV-based athletic trainer for Work Right NW. On top of working as an ATC in the collegiate, clinic, and industry settings, she also has experience as a Sports Information Director, Social Media Manager and Website Content Planner. She has great insight into the nuances of pregnancy as a full time working mother to two rambunctious girls.

