

# INDUSTRIAL SPORTS MEDICINE

# POSTPARTUM PREP



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, do not expect it to be an easy and fast recovery.

Don't expect yourself to get 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. 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

## Benefits of Postpartum Exercise:

- Increased energy levels
- More positive moods
- Lower propensity for anxiety/depression
- Reduced risk of heart disease and obesity

## PREPARED Solution:

Use PREPARED as a preventative tool even for postpartum care both for work life and your home life taking care of your new baby.

- Pre-shift warm-up
- Proper lifting posture
- Aligning your shoulders, hips, and toes
- Remain in the green zone
- Debrief and recuperate

## 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.

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.





## Leg Raise

Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Engage your lower abdominals and gently flatten your back against the floor. Hold your flat back while you raise one bent leg. Slowly lower it toward the floor and without resting lifting it back up. Repeat. Then switch sides.



## Supine Heel Slide

Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Engage your lower abdominals and gently flatten your back against the floor. Hold your flat back while you extend one leg straight out as if you are dragging your heel along the floor. Return to starting position. Repeat. Then switch sides.



## Supine Toe Taps

Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Engage your lower abdominals and gently flatten your back against the floor. Hold your flat back and tap your toes toward the ground alternating with the other foot. One leg will be up at hip height while the other taps the toe. Then switch. Repeat.



## Glute Stretching

To stretch the deep hip muscles and decrease tension in the low back lie on your back with your knees bent. Cross your ankle over your opposite knee and to increase the stretch, reach through to grab onto the back of your thigh.



## Pec Stretching

Clasp both hands behind the back. Slowly elevate your hands while holding your shoulders back to feel a stretch in the front of the chest.



## Back Extensions

To mobilize the low back and stretch into extension, place your hands by the sides of your shoulders, keep your hips on the floor and extend your arms straight.

Prior to starting any fitness program, check with your physician to make sure you are healthy enough to begin an exercise routine.

## How To Return to Exercise



### START SMALL

Begin with 5-10 minutes of exercise and monitor how you feel. Increase as you feel 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.



### BUDDY WORKOUT

Get baby involved with your workout and use them as your resistance.



### DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Lay down on your back on a flat surface with knees bent or in a comfortable upright seated position. Place your left hand on your chest and right hand on your belly button. Inhaling through your nose, try to push your right hand toward the sky by expanding your belly. Picture your diaphragm pressing towards your hips and your lungs inflating.

Slowly exhale through your mouth (as if you were blowing into a balloon) and feel your right-hand lower towards the floor or into your chest. Your left hand should be moving significantly less than your right hand throughout these breaths.