

This is the third and final installment of maintaining fitness during pregnancy. The previous two articles can be located at (<http://www.t2bb.com/newsletters.htm>) regarding exercises during pregnancy. This month's article deals with post partum.

In the last eight years as a movement specialist, I have trained 25 plus pregnant women. Expert I am not, rather, more of a high level provider of the understandings of movement to aid in the safety and efficacy of exercise on the mother and the fetus. The information within this article is based on my experience training women during pregnancy, research, and corresponding with local Obstetricist's. Ultimately, women who wish to initiate or continue a regular exercise program should do so ONLY in consultation with her obstetrician, midwife or appropriate physician.

Post partum is relevant to any women who has given birth. The first stages of returning to function are dealing with the CORE (core being from your armpits to your hips and everything around it)! Training to be Balanced (T2BB) cannot emphasize this enough as being the first thing to regain but it seems to always hold a distance second to pre-pregnant status.

First, I will write it again and again until I am blue in the face. It is imperative that every female reading this article perform this now. The Kegel exercise! This exercise is the foundation of the core (which are rhythmic contractions of the pelvic floor muscles and the muscles that hold the bladder and many other organ in place).

The "one, two" or better stated "pelvic bracing" exercise, as T2BB calls it, is where it begins. Do this now, lie on your back or while your sitting reading this now and contact your abdominal muscles. This is one. This is followed by the contraction of your pelvic floor muscles (the muscles that prevent you from going to the bathroom). This is two. These two work together but must be learned separately, which benefit women to "become aware of these muscles to contract and relax during delivery, to develop bladder control, and in this case return the body to pre-pregnant status."

The return to exercise tends to involve inconsistent workouts, pushing or running with a stroller, or sit-ups only. At times, a rush to the bathroom usually follows the start of any of the above mentioned. It is called incontinence. In my experience, nine times out of ten, women can reduce the effects of incontinence or eliminate them all together by learning "pelvic bracing".

Once "pelvic bracing" is consistent, one can start performing abdominal exercises. T2BB is not a fan of abdominal exercises that have no purpose, however, for post partum women, highly indicated. For example, the side fold exercise is a great all around mid section exercise that helps the core engage when performing exercise.

Start: Lie on your side with the top foot crossed under other foot. The top hand is straight above head near floor and bottom hand perpendicular to body with palm down on floor. Movement: Roll back onto one buttocks cheek while pushing off bottom hand. Quickly raise feet and top hand to touch each other above body (upper body comes off floor). Balance on hand and side of one butt cheek. Slowly lower without touching floor and repeat. Perform 12 times each side.

Second is attempting to lose the weight gain post partum. If anyone has ever worked out with T2BB, she knows that T2BB trains individuals who have set physical goals. Looking good is the by-product of training hard and performing better. That stated, typically the excess weight on a female hangs around due to continued breast feeding, lack of sleep and the stress managing a new life.

How does one return to pre-pregnant status, exercise but who has time for exercise? Correct? The number one reason for not exercising after a child is born is "I don't have enough time."

T2BB promotes the phrase "something is better than nothing". Even though one wishes she could go out for a 2 hour bike ride or hike the pass, time is of the essence. Do what you can when you can. Try incorporating your child into exercises.

Examples include when holding a 1-3 month old in your arms, do 10 squats, 10 lunges both sides, and 10 walking side squats in each direction. The legs will feel it, especially holding a six to twelve pound baby. If a child is in the

beginning stages of walking, hold his/her hands from behind while you are in a deep squat stepping forward, always keeping a wide base of support.

A favorite at T2BB is “copy cat” with your child, what ever she/he does, you do...I will tell you it is harder than you think...twist, turn, squat, balance, roll, reach...etc. Play tag with your child, except you are on one foot the entire time or you crawl. Pick your child up and press him/her over your head (in a safe manner of course) followed by a squat, twist him/her back and forth or in circles while in a stationary squat or lunge position for 5 minutes non stop...what you think is nothing becomes something...

There are many ways for exercise and there is time. Get your core in order, exercise with you child and stop making excuses. Please feel free to contact me via email for future mother/child workouts at T2BB or questions regarding how you can train with your child.