



Post-Natal Exercises Following a Caesarian Section

How to Exercise from 6 Weeks Post-Op

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General Advice

- Six weeks after a non-complicated delivery, you may be ready to start with an exercise program
- This is usually when your sutures and muscles have healed, and your muscles can support more load
- In order to know if you are ready to start exercising, it is important to attend your six week follow-up with your Obstetrician or Gynaecologist
- Your perineum, abdomen and vaginal canal will be assessed in order to ensure that all sutures have healed
- Your Doctor will then clear you for exercise, unless there is a complication in which case you may need a further period of healing

Scar Massage

- This can be started once the scar has healed around 6 weeks, once cleared by your Doctor
- Check that the wound is not open, and that there are no scabs
- You may experience tension and a stretching feeling, but there should not be severe pain or discomfort

Method

- If you feel any tenderness, massage around the scar to start
- Using your fingertips, slowly move up and down, side to side and in gentle circles along the scar
- Once it is comfortable, you can start self-massaging over the scar

Preparation for Exercises

To prepare for abdominal exercises check for a separation in your abdominal muscles (diastasis recti):

- Lie on your back, bend your knees and lift your head
- If you see or feel a separation in the muscles of your abdomen, especially the area above your navel, contact your Physiotherapist to assist you in helping these muscles to come together again
- Incorrect exercising while you present with a separation in the abdominal muscles, can cause damage and problems in the future
- If you do not feel a separation in your muscles, then you are ready to continue with the exercise program



Exercise 1 - Basic Core Stabilization

- Place your hands on your hips, and support your abdominal muscles by gently pushing them towards your belly button with your hands
- Activate the deep abdominal layer
- You may also feel the pelvic floor muscles lift as the pelvic floor muscles are deeply connected to the abdominal muscles
- Perform this exercise 20 times

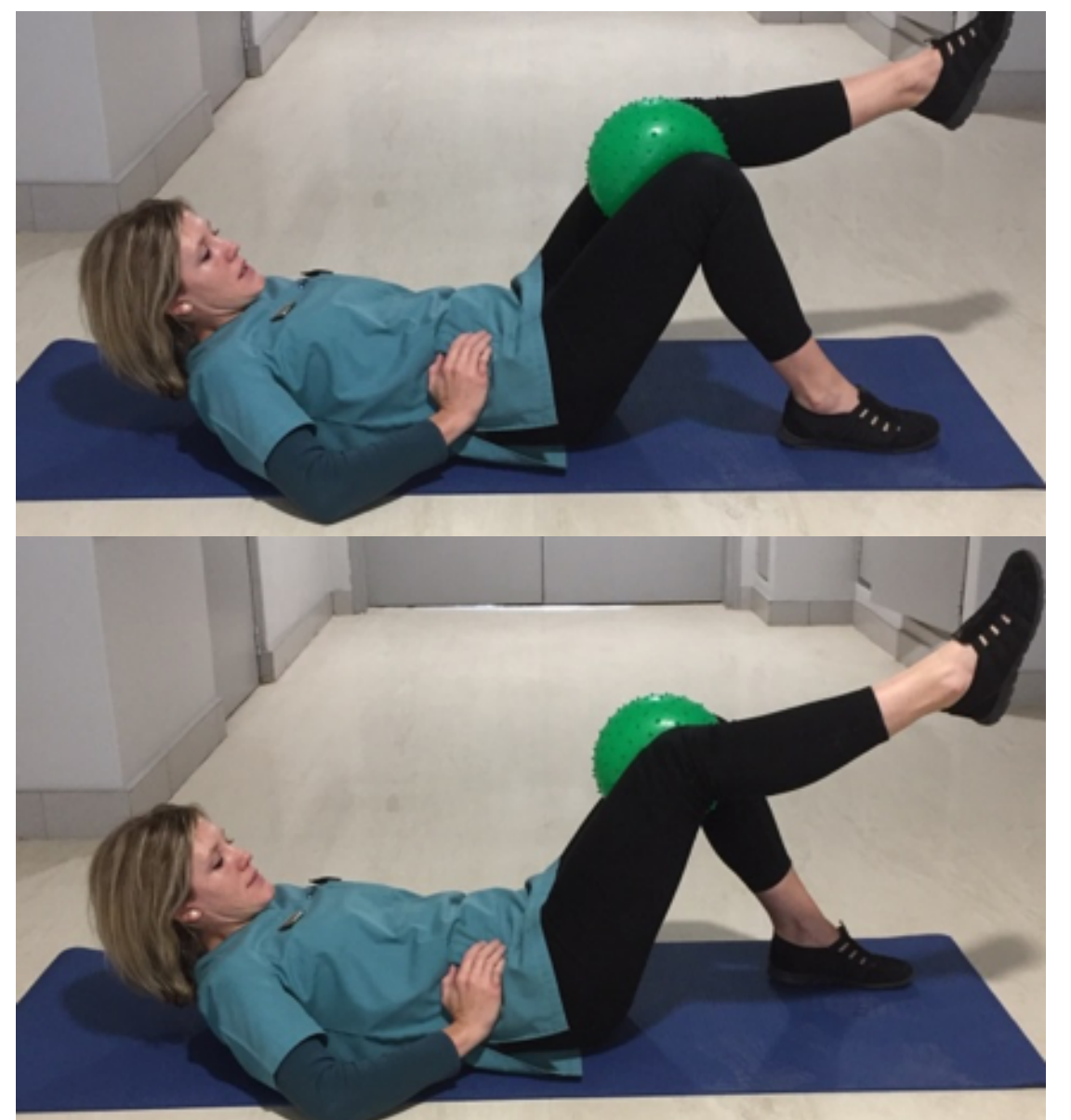


Once you can perform this exercise effectively, you are ready to move on to the next exercise

This exercise will always be the precursor in the exercises to follow. Always activate the deep layer of abdominal muscles first and then perform the rest of the exercise.

Exercise 2 - Progressive Core Stabilization

- Lie on your back, support your abdominal muscles and place a ball between your knees
- Elevate one lower leg, lower again and then perform the same with your other leg
- You can lift your head in order to achieve a stronger abdominal contraction if required
- This exercise can be performed without a ball
- Perform this exercise 10-20 times as able



Exercise 3 - Bridging With a Ball

- Lie on your back, support your abdominal muscles and place a ball between your knees
- Gently lift your bottom up off the mat
- Ensure that you do not arch your back too much as it can put strain on your lower back
- Lower down to the mat
- Perform this exercise 10-20 times as able



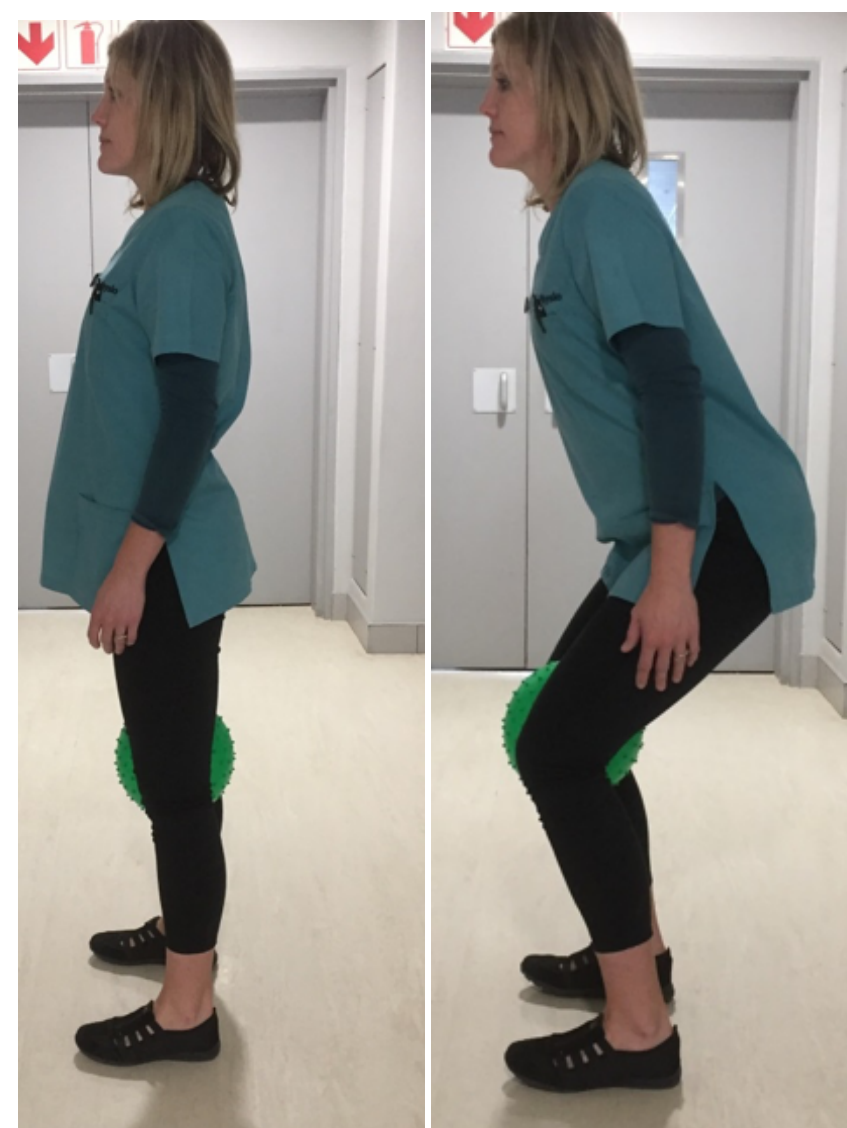
Exercise 4 - Plank Progression

- Go onto all fours with your arms slightly in front of your shoulders, and place a ball or pillow between your knees
- Activate abdominal muscles
- Slowly move your upper body forwards while maintaining the activation of the abdominal and pelvic floor muscles, and squeezing the ball
- Perform this exercise 10-20 times as able



Exercise 5 - Partial Squats

- Stand up straight and place a ball between your thighs
- Activate your abdominal muscles
- Ensuring that your knees do not go over your toes, gently push your bottom backwards and squat down
- Ensure you maintain a gentle squeeze of the ball
- Come back into standing
- Perform this exercise 10-20 times as able



Exercise 6 - Lunge Manouever

- Stand up straight, and hold a ball in front of you with your arms out straight
- Keeping your back up straight, take a step forward and bend your knees
- Step back into the starting position
- Repeat this exercise stepping forward with the other leg
- Perform this exercise 10-20 times as able



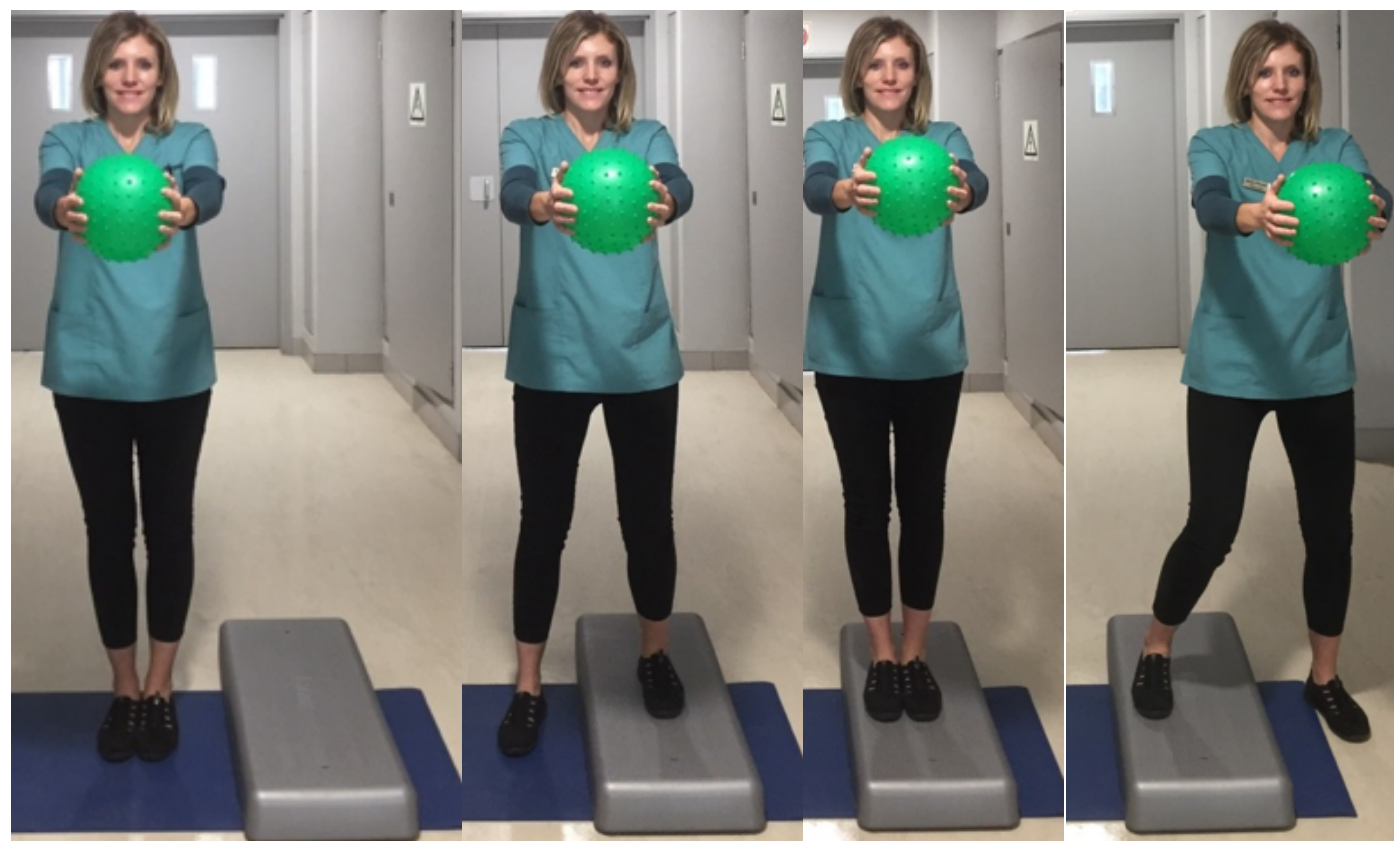
Exercise 7 - Standing Balance

- Stand up straight
- Shift your weight onto one leg, and slowly lift up the non-weight bearing leg while activating your abdominal muscles
- Try to maintain your balance for as long as possible
- Repeat on the other leg
- Perform this exercise 5 times as able



Exercise 8 - Side Step Ups

- Stand parallel to a step, and hold a ball in your hands and place your arms out in front of you
- Step sideways onto the step first with one leg, then the other, ensuring you activate your abdominal muscles
- Step off the other side of the step, one foot followed by the other
- Repeat this for 30-60 seconds



Exercise 9 - Forward Step Ups

- Repeat exercise 8 facing the step



Exercise 10 - Advanced Control with Theraband

- Tie/ secure a theraband into a door frame
- Stand up straight and hold the theraband in one hand
- Activate your abdominal muscles
- Pull down on the theraband while lifting your opposite leg up
- Slowly return your leg down, controlling the movement
- Repeat this exercise 10-15 times on each leg



If you have any queries, or would like a personalised rehabilitation program, contact us at Dial a Physio.