



Scan the QR  
code to  
download



**Antenatal  
Physio Advice**



**Patient information**

# **Antenatal Physiotherapy**



**Excellent patient care, together**

## Pregnancy Related Pelvic Girdle Pain

Around one in five pregnant women experiences discomfort in the around their pelvis during pregnancy. The discomfort is often felt over the pubic bone at the front, below your tummy, or across one side of your lower back, or both sides. It is important to look after yourself to help prevent and manage pain. More information can be found by scanning the QR code:



## Sleeping Tips

It is recommended not to sleep flat on your back from 16 weeks as the weight of the womb can reduce the blood flow to the heart and lungs. You may find it helpful to alternate from side to side throughout the night.

Using additional pillows for support or comfort may be helpful:

- Behind your back to prevent rolling onto back.
- Pillow between the legs and one between feet to keep the hips, knees and ankles aligned.
- Pillow support under your “bump” to reduce rotation of the spine.



## Posture Tips

Transfer from lying to sitting on the edge of the bed by (see video using QR code):



Rolling onto your side in one movement (you may find having a pillow between knees beneficial).

- Use your upper limbs to push your body up into sitting as your legs move down to the floor at the same time.

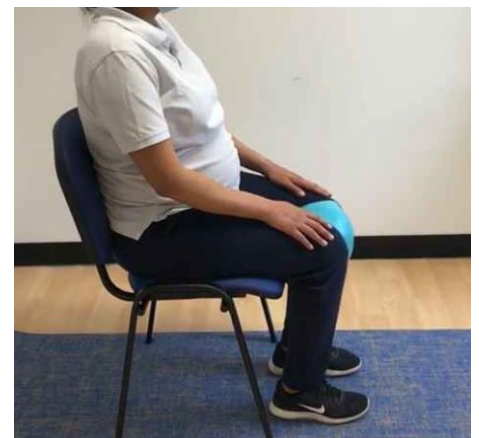


Lifting or picking up objects:

- Bring the object close to you and bend down to the object (as if you were squatting).
- Avoid breath holding.

Getting in and out of the car:

- Use a towel or something similar between knees.
- Move your body as one to get out of the car by swinging your legs together.



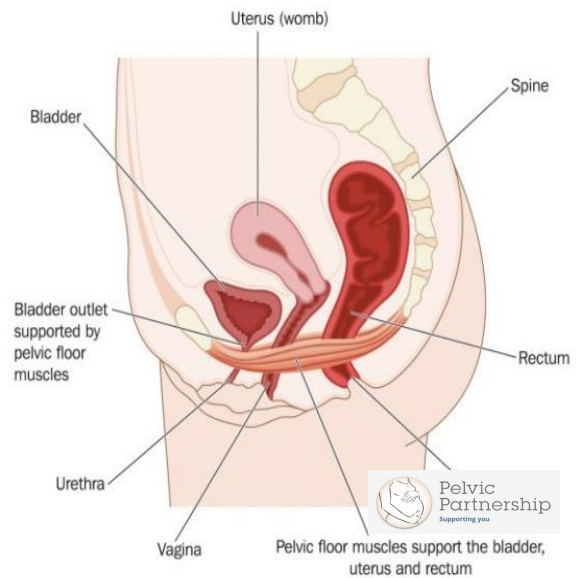
## Pelvic Floor Exercises

The pelvic floor muscles are made up of two types of muscle fibres and it is important to exercise both. The “slow” fibres are related to muscle endurance and the “fast” fibres relate to muscle strength (a pulse contraction).

Imagine that you are trying to stop yourself “passing wind”, without squeezing your buttocks together. Draw the pelvic floor muscles upwards and forwards from the back passage towards the front passage - like a zip.



(Scan QR code). Ensure to relax your pelvic floor muscles between each repetition.



- Aim for 10-second holds, repeat 10 times, to exercise your endurance muscles. (Tip: do this without breath-holding, count out aloud to ensure normal breathing.)
- Aim for 10 repetitions to exercise your strength (pulse) muscles.

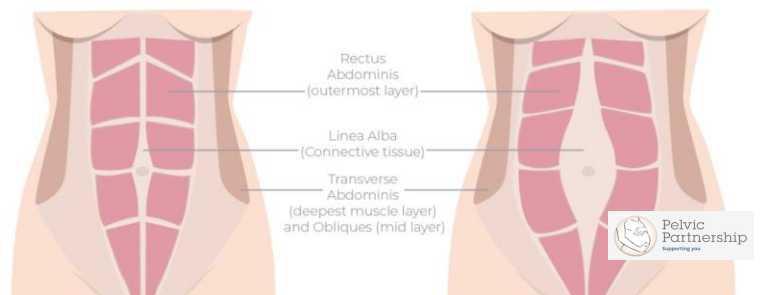
Both exercises need to be completed four times a day. These exercises are for LIFE — try to develop a daily pelvic floor exercise routine.

If you struggle with completing these exercises, please seek a pelvic health physiotherapy referral from your GP or consultant. Squeezy App (QR code) can be helpful.



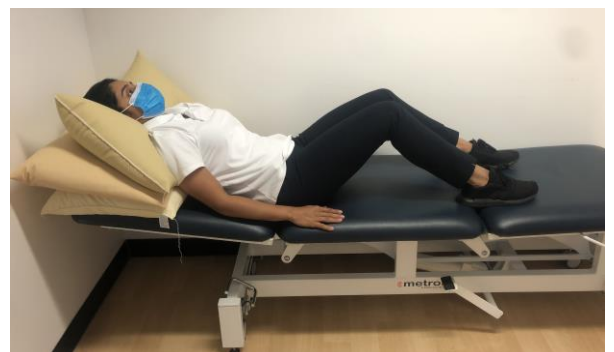
## Abdominal Muscle Exercises

Your transverse abdominals are the deepest of the abdominal muscle group. They work together with the pelvic floor muscles and other abdominal muscles to support your pelvic organs and back. Strengthening these muscles are important to help offload and support your body throughout the duration of pregnancy.



Exercising your transverse abdominal muscles:

- Lie on your back with a few pillows to prop you up but avoid lying completely flat.
- Lay the tips of your fingers on your bikini line.
- Breathe in gently allowing your stomach to rise.
- Breathe out keeping your back and ribcage relaxed while engaging your lower stomach muscles as if you were to “fasten the top button of a tight pair of jeans”.



- Hold for 3-5 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times (tip: do this without breath holding, count out aloud to ensure normal breathing).
- You can try this standing, which is known as the “Bump Hug” (see QR code):
- You can try this in four-point kneeling (see QR code):



## Breathing Tips

Breathing exercises are important to include in your daily routine. It helps to improve mood, sleep and anxiety and helps relax the pelvic floor muscles. Following these tips will help relax and calm the body and can be completed for 5-10 minutes:

- Adopt a comfortable position, place your hands on your ribcage to facilitate a deeper breath.
- Relax your jaw, open your mouth slightly and draw attention to your body’s resting state.
- Inhale through your nose, allow your ribs and stomach to expand and your pelvic floor to lengthen.
- Exhale through your mouth, allow your ribs and stomach to deflate and your pelvic floor returns to rest.

## Pelvic Girdle Pain Exercises

Breathe in to prepare to move and always move with the out breath. This allows you to use your muscles more effectively. You can view the below exercises and complete them as pain allows:

- Gym ball – pelvic tilts
- Bump lift from sitting
- Sit to stand with ball
- Gym ball – wall squat
- Wall bridge
- 4-point kneeling – bump lift
- 4-point kneeling – cat/camel stretch



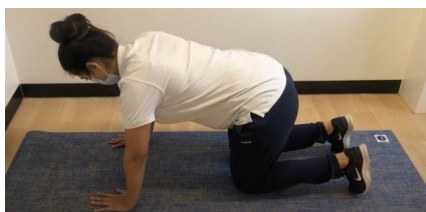
## Pacing Tips

- Be as active as possible, keeping comfortable but avoid activities that aggravate your pain.
- Sit down to get dressed and undressed; avoid standing on one leg.
- Accept help when you need it.
- Take the stairs one at a time– lead with the less painful leg when going upstairs and lead with the more painful leg coming downstairs.
- Reduce your stride length with walking, there is no need to rush.
- Avoid the ‘waddle’.
- Ensure you have rest periods throughout your day.
- Break down your housework tasks, for every 20-minute task give yourself a 5 to 10 minute rest.

## Positions of Ease

Adopting any of these positions can be helpful during pregnancy. These can be viewed using the QR code:

- Four-point kneeling – cat/camel stretch
- Gym ball seated rotations
- Gym ball pelvis side to side



## Useful Resources

[Prenatal and postnatal yoga video](#)



[Start4Life Exercising in pregnancy](#)



[Tommy's - An easy pregnancy workout](#)



[Pelvic floor exercises during and after pregnancy \(youtube.com\)](#)



[Pelvic Health and Wellbeing during Pregnancy Videos | POGP](#)





# Physical activity for pregnant women



Helps to control weight gain



Helps reduce high blood pressure problems



Helps to prevent diabetes of pregnancy



Improves fitness



Improves sleep



Improves mood

**Not active?**

Start gradually

**Already active?**

Keep going



Do **muscle strengthening** activities twice a week

**Every activity counts**, in bouts of at least 10 minutes

**No evidence of harm**

**Listen to your body and adapt**



**Don't bump the bump**

## Resources from:



NORDIC  
FITMAMA

## How to contact us

### West Hertfordshire Therapy Unit

Jacketts Field  
Abbots Langley  
Hertfordshire  
WD5 0PA

Tel: 01923 378130

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366

## PALS

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net).



Language



Large Print



Braille



Audio

### Concerns, complaints or suggestions

If you are unhappy with your experience or would like to give feedback, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS is available to patients, relatives, carers and friends to raise concerns.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit our [website](#).

Author	Priya Khosla
Department	Outpatient Physiotherapy
Ratified / review date	June 2025 / June 2028
ID number	45/2421/V4