

What you need
to know about
*exercising safely & intelligently
in pregnancy*



A guide to help you
take the guesswork
out of your
prenatal workouts



About me! Who am I?!

Hey, I'm Nikki - Mum of soon-to-be two kids, Certified Pre & Post-natal Fitness Specialist, Personal Trainer, Pelacore Instructor and Founder of the [Babes 'n Bellies Bootcamp](#).

I work with pregnant and postpartum women to help educate and train them for birth, and then help ease them back to their favourite activities postpartum.

Since having my son, and spontaneously going into labour prematurely, I have a passion for helping women with pelvic floor and core health to help train and give them the tools to have an empowered pregnancy.

When my water broke 6-weeks early at 2 am in September 2019, I was terrified. But because I had thankfully trained for labour and done the research, I knew exactly what I wanted and was fortunate experience a birth that was very close to what I had hoped for.

I am not telling you this to brag. I am telling you this because I want to prevent women from ever saying "I wish someone I told me."

Today, I teach new moms how to stay active during pregnancy and ease back into fitness postpartum, and let me tell you it doesn't have to be all about just sitting there doing kegels!

With love & fitness,

Nikki

Nikki Johnston

[Founder of the Babes 'n Bellies Pelvic Core Method](#)

Babes 'n Bellies

Pelvic Core Method

TIPS FOR SAFE MOVEMENT & WORKOUTS IN PREGNANCY



**During your workouts,
please remember the following:**

- Your Rate of Perceived Exertion should feel like a 5-7/10. In other words, you should be able to talk but not be breathless. You should not be in your anaerobic zone.
- During pregnancy, the hormone relaxin causes joint laxity, meaning we are more prone to injury. For this reason, your workouts focus on doing light weights and high reps, and low impact exercises.
- You should be able to do exercises on your back safely until 16 weeks of pregnancy. After 16 weeks, you can lie on a pillow on an incline, but you can also let your body be your guide. If you feel ill, dizzy or nauseous, then stop, gently press yourself up to seated. Take a few moments, and reset placing a pillow behind your back - or skip doing work on your back altogether.
- If you have been very active prior to pregnancy, it is ok to feel soreness after a workout, as long as it is not too intense and you are not feeling completely exhausted. Your body is already working really hard to grow a baby! If you have not been very active prior to pregnancy, some light soreness is ok, but if it is debilitating in any way, than you should back off. If this is what you are experiencing, then please speak to me or message me about it.

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BREATHING & EXERCISE FOR AN OPTIMALLY-FIT PREGNANCY

It's so common for women to be exhausted and nauseous during pregnancy that, for some, it can be hard to stay motivated to stay active.

Believe it or not, **learning how to breathe is a really important part of retaining optimal core function during pregnancy** - and you can do it from the couch! You can then learn how to engage your transverse abdominals (key muscles for pushing) and do pelvic floor contractions with your everyday movement, to keep your daily movement or workouts functional.

Here are a couple videos on how to breath & move with your breath:

How to do the "core breath":



Bonus video: Here is a [thorough explanation of how to do diaphragmatic breathing with pelvic floor muscular training.](#)

You can actually do the Core Breath in sync with each exercise during your workout, and I explain how to do the next video called "Functional Workout For Your Pelvic Floor".

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BREATHING & EXERCISE FOR AN OPTIMALLY-FIT PREGNANCY

How to exercise using the "core breath":



If you don't have any absolute contraindications to exercise, but can fit in some light movement, check out a couple of short video you can do at home:

Gentle Pelvic Core Combo Workout



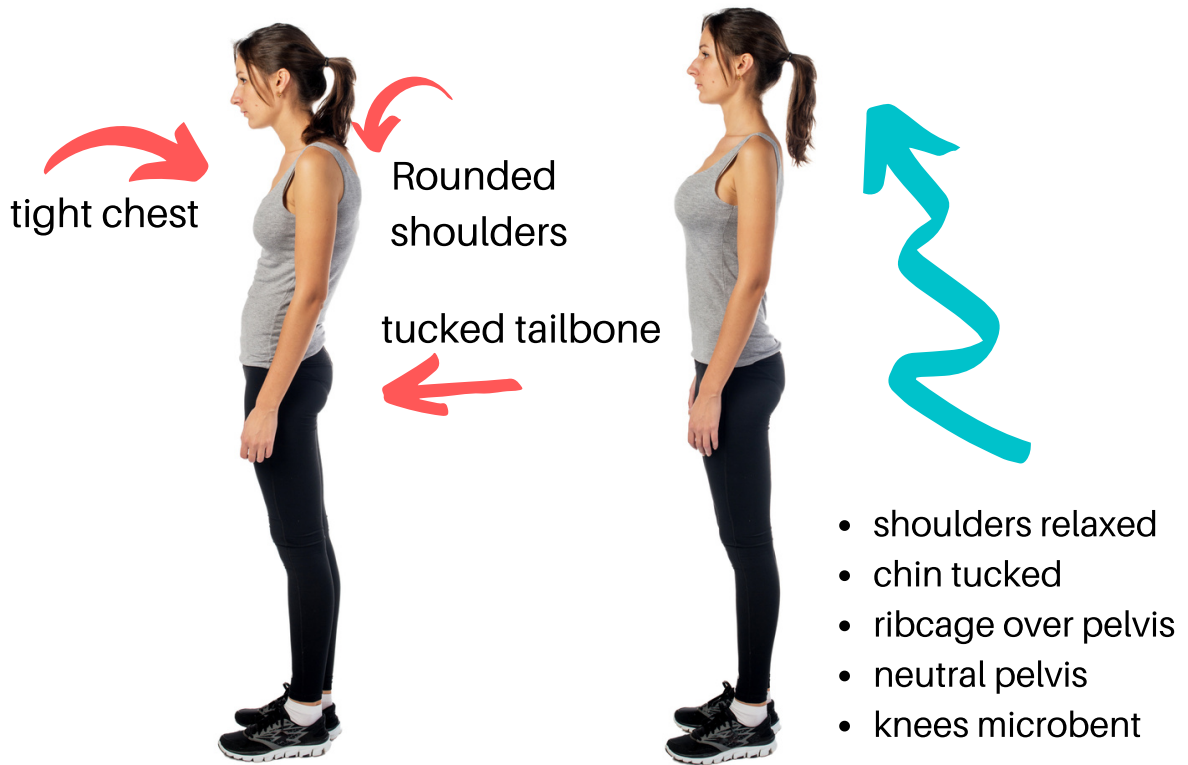
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POSTURE & ALIGNMENT IN PREGNANCY FOR OPTIMIZING YOUR PELVIC CORE

It's also worth remembering that what you do throughout the day; how you stand, walk, sit, and even poop, has an impact on how your core functions throughout your pregnancy!

So even if you aren't working out, being mindful of how you stand and sit throughout the day can actually really help you optimize how your deep core functions throughout your pregnancy.

Alignment is a tool and not a rule, so don't be obsessed, but being mindful is helpful!



Less optimal
posture

More optimal
posture

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TIPS FOR OPTIMIZING POSTURE & ALIGNMENT THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY

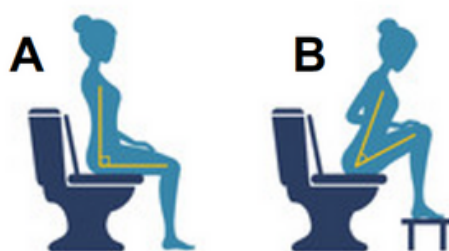
1) There is no need to force alignment in pregnancy, but it is useful to be aware of your patterns, find the cause and try some exercises and movement to correct muscular imbalances. [Contact me for a complementary Posture & Alignment Assessment!](#)

2) **From seated**, sit propped up on a rolled up towel, on your sitting bones. This will open your pelvic outlet and allow you to sit in a more neutral pelvic position.

3) If you do desk work, during the day **alternate between your chair and a stability ball**. On a stability ball, you can do pelvic rocking: tracing circles with your hips in either direction, tucking and untucking your tailbone, shift your hips from side to side. This can help you maintain mobility in your pelvis throughout the day, and prevent it from staying in just one position.

2) Set an alarm to get up and **walk around every 20-30 minutes** - go grab some water or tea, take a bio-break. No one is meant to sit for extended periods of time, and especially not during pregnancy.

3) For going #2, **use a stool or a squatty potty!** Sometimes during pregnancy, our digestive system can slow down due to the relaxation of smooth muscle contractions in the colon from the hormone relaxin. You might be tempted to bear down to eliminate. Having your feet elevated using a stool or squatty potty can help better align your pelvis for more optimal "elimination".



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BONUS TIPS FOR PRENATAL EXERCISE & MOVEMENT



1) I highly recommend you see a Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist around 20 weeks, 35 weeks, and then again, postpartum, around 6 to 8 weeks, and at least once more after that. This way, the PT can get a proper baseline assessment of your whole body, core and pelvic floor during pregnancy, prior to childbirth. They will be able to tell you the status of your pelvic floor, is it toned or weak, and provide instructions on how to do a kegel properly.

2) Upper body mobility - your upper body is the "top canister" of your core, and ideally moves and rotates nicely so that your core can function optimally. Here is a [free bonus video](#) that you can follow to keep mobility throughout your upper body.

3) Take time to down-regulate your nervous system through meditation, yoga nidra, gentle yoga, mindful walking, or acupuncture, for example.. As you progress through your pregnancy, your body wants to begin to soften, release and yield.

For more free resources, follow me on:

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[Check out my Prepare to Push online Workshop.](#)

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