

EASING YOUR PATH TO
MOTHERHOOD

Your Guide to a Comfortable Third Trimester and Beyond



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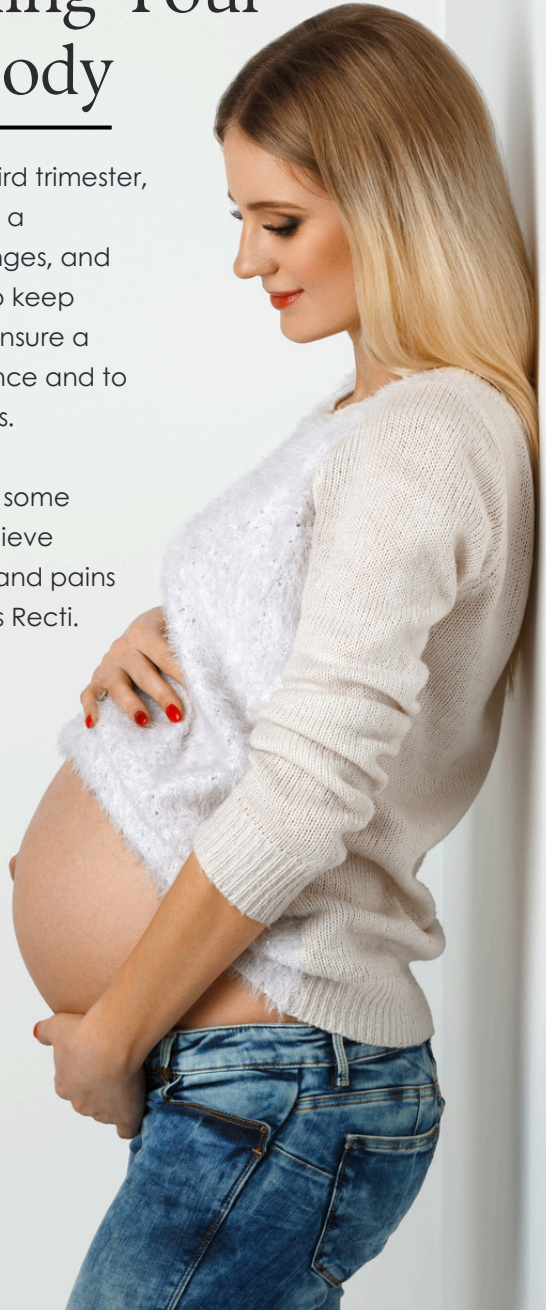




Understanding Your Changing Body

By the time you reach the third trimester, your body has gone through a tremendous number of changes, and you will need to learn how to keep yourself as fit as possible to ensure a better child birthing experience and to relieve daily aches and pains.

In this guide, I will be sharing some awesome tips to help you relieve common pregnancy aches and pains and how to prevent Diastasis Recti.



What You Can Expect

- Weight gain and a large stretched out belly due to the growing baby.
- Aches and pains that can be caused by the loosening hormonal effects on the connective tissue in your body, pregnancy posture, swelling in your hands and feet and varicose veins.
- It may feel much harder to get around because of shortness of breath which is caused by the growing uterus pressing upwards against the diaphragm and hindering your ability to take in a deep breath.
- Tiredness which may be caused by an interrupted sleep pattern, something that many women suffer with during the last trimester of pregnancy.





Movement During the Third Trimester

Although it may be the last thing on your mind, movement and exercise during the third trimester can be beneficial for both mother and baby, but certain precautions should be taken to ensure safety.





Why Movement?

Studies show that women who exercised moderately during their pregnancy for 30 minutes most days of the week, have quicker deliveries and less complications. Moderate exercise is defined as being able to carry on a conversation while exercising. Other positive effects include less weight gain and increased chances of a vaginal delivery.

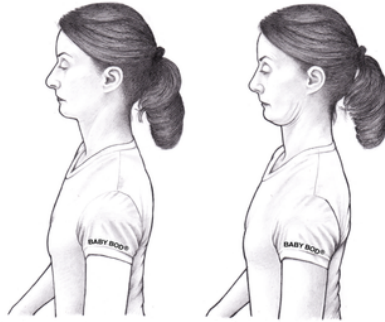
The benefits for baby include a better chance of optimal birth weight and decrease risk of preterm birth before 37 weeks. Other studies showed increased blood flow to the baby's brain and enhanced brain development.

So, baby can be born smarter if you exercise during your pregnancy!

It is always best to consult with your healthcare provider before starting any exercise program while you are pregnant.



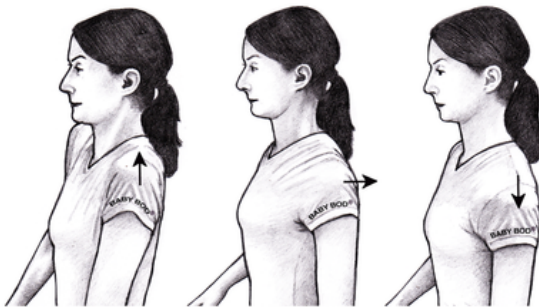
Chin Tuck



1. To begin, sit or stand in good alignment.
2. As you keep your eyes looking straight ahead, tuck your chin in and hold for 2 or 3 counts. Then relax.
3. Repeat this 5 times.

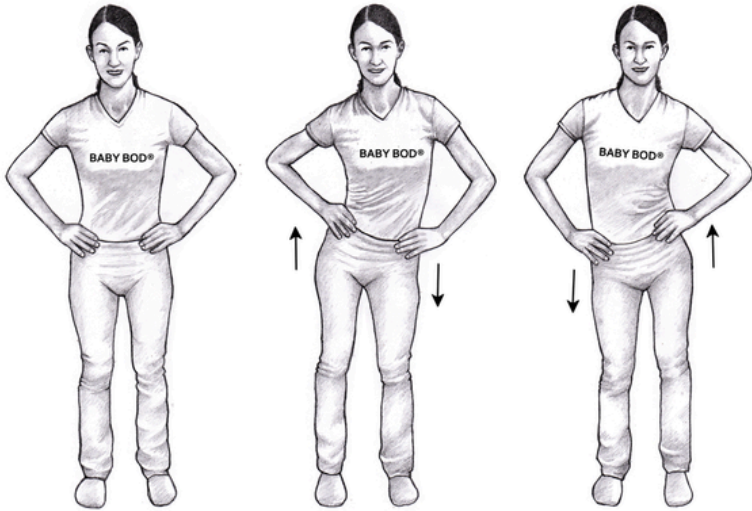
Note: If you find yourself looking down after you tuck in your chin, you are doing it wrong. Keep your eyes looking at the same object throughout the entire stretch.

Shoulder Rolls



1. To begin, sit or stand in good alignment.
2. Without moving your chest, move your shoulders up, back and down.
3. Do this 5 times.

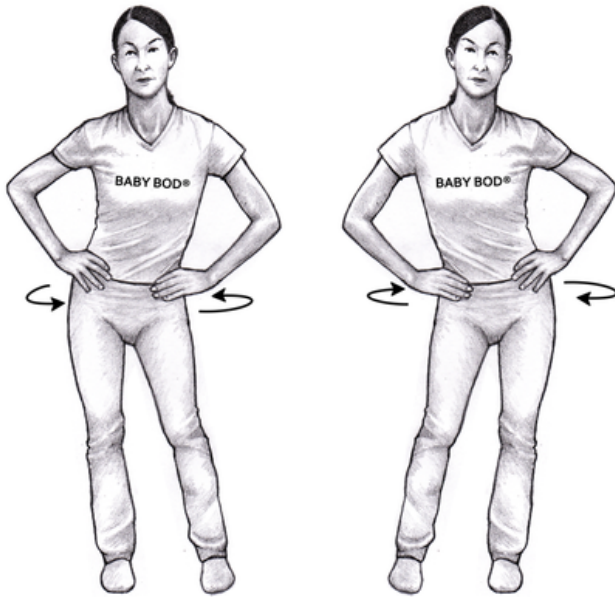
Pelvic Up and Downs



1. To begin, stand in front of a mirror with your knees relaxed.
2. Place your hands on both sides of your pelvis.
3. Lift one side of your pelvis up toward the ceiling while the other side of your pelvis moves down toward the floor. Then reverse.
4. Do 5 times in each direction.

Note: Make sure to move in pain-free ranges only. If one side lifts higher than the other, don't force it—just move within a range that makes you feel good.

Pelvic Circles



1. To begin, stand in front of a mirror with your knees relaxed.
2. Place your hands on both sides of your pelvis.
3. Move your pelvis in a circle to the right 5 times then to the left 5 times.

Note: *Do not force your pelvis to move into painful ranges.*

Walking Program



One simple way you can get in exercise is just by walking. Try to walk 20-30 minutes daily. You can break it up into 2 or 3 mini walks if you don't have the time or energy to do it all at one time.

Walking not only improves physical health but also enhances mental well-being. Remember to wear comfortable shoes, maintain good posture, and stay hydrated.

Making walking a regular part of your routine can significantly contribute to your overall fitness and vitality throughout pregnancy and in your postpartum recovery.



Caring for Diastasis Recti

Dia...what?

As your uterus expands to accommodate your growing baby, the connective tissue (linea alba) that lies in-between the 2 "six-pack" muscles (rectus abdominis) needs to spread out.

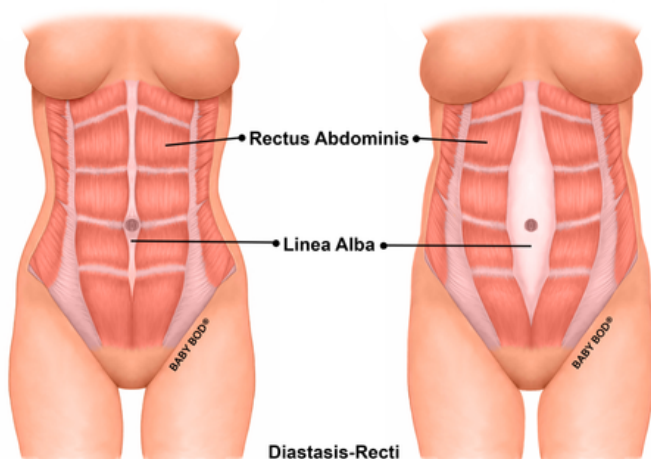
This is a normal occurrence called Diastasis Recti and can resolve after childbirth with the right precautions.

It is best to reduce the amount of strain you place on your abdominal muscles when you are pregnant and while you are recovering from childbirth.

You can learn more about diastasis recti in chapter 7 of my book, ["Baby Bod: Turn Flab to Fab in 12 Weeks Flat."](#)



Tips for Managing Diastasis Recti



1. Exhale when you exert yourself and avoid strenuous activities or exercises that place strain on the belly.

Try not to increase belly pressure by holding your breath when you exert yourself. This will cause the diastasis to spread more. Examples of this is holding your breath when you exercise, lifting heavy things, or even pushing a vacuum.

Some simple activities that were easy to do before pregnancy, but could be challenging during your third trimester, include raising up from a chair, getting out of a car, walking a flight of stairs, or lifting a pot of water. Try to become aware of the times you hold your breath and try to exhale when you lift, push, or move.

Doing abdominal massages like the ones in chapters 8 and 9 in [Baby Bod](#) can also help improve muscle activation.

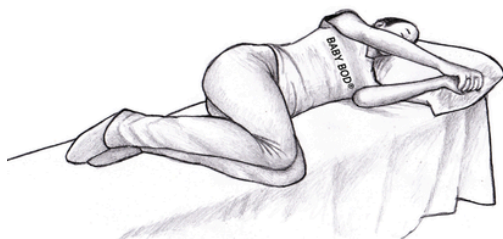
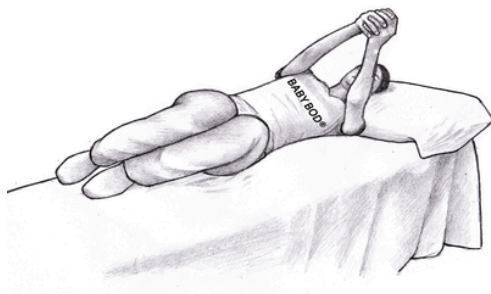
2. Avoid “jackknife behavior,” such as getting up from bed or up from the floor as if you are doing a sit-up. Instead, learn to turn sideways in a “log roll” and push-up sideways.

How to Roll Over in Bed(Log Roll)

1. Lie on your back and bend your knees. Clasp your fingers together and raise your arms up towards the ceiling.



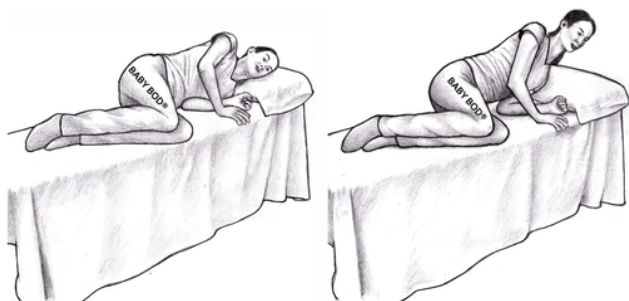
2. Gently EXHALE, as if you are cleaning your sunglasses. Move your arms and knees at the same time as you slowly roll to one side. (Roll over like a log.)



Note: Make sure to use the log roll when moving around and changing positions in bed; try not to twist your back or do a sit-up when you change positions.

How to Sit Up in Bed

1. After you do the log roll, make sure you are at the edge of the bed. Gently EXHALE and push up with your arms; use the arm that's on top to give you leverage and use the lower elbow to push down as you lift your body up sideways (as you see in the illustration below).



Once you are partially up, drop your legs over the side of the bed so they swing downwards as you continue to push yourself up into a seated position. Continue exhaling as you are getting up. Try not to twist your back as you are coming up.



Note: Make sure to use the log roll when moving around and changing positions in bed; try not to twist your back or do a sit-up when you change positions.

How to Get Up From A Bed (Or Chair)

Here is an easy way to take the pressure off your abdominal and pelvic floor muscles when you get up from bed or a chair. This is a good habit to continue to protect your abdominal muscles throughout your entire postpartum recovery.

1. Scoot to the edge of the bed. Make sure you are sitting far enough so your feet are firmly touching the floor.
2. Once you are sitting on the very edge of the bed, lean forward and put the weight of your body on your feet and place your hands on your thighs.



1. **To get up, bend forward, and push down on your thighs as you gently EXHALE, and lift your buttock upwards and off the bed.**
2. **Use your arm and leg strength to get yourself up. Keep the bent forward position as you continue to get up off the bed.**
3. **Once you have all the weight on your feet, stand upright.**

Dealing with Constipation

When someone is constipated, they tend to take in a deep breath and try to push that bowel movement out. That pushing causes an increase in intra-abdominal pressure, which can put further strain on the linea alba, causing the strips of rectus muscle to separate further.

Pushing also places a lot of strain on the pelvic floor muscles and connective tissue in the pelvic region, which could further weaken this area.

Here is the best way to empty your bowels:



- Sit with your feet apart. Rest them on a stool or yoga blocks.
- Relax your stomach muscles.
- Lean forward and place your hands on your thighs.
- Instead of straining to pass the bowel movement, try gently exhaling and saying “mmmmmm.”
- Do not remain on the toilet for more than 5 to 10 minutes at a time.

Prevent constipation by eating a good diet with plenty of fiber. Drink a lot of water and practice walking and moving around often.

Learn how to do a massage for constipation in my book [“Baby Bod: Turn Flab to Fab in 12 Weeks Flat”](#) - chapter 8 for vaginal delivery and chapter 9 for c-section.



Managing Pregnancy Aches and Pains

Pregnancy can be one of the most exciting times in your life, but along with the excitement, you may be feeling aches and pains.

As mentioned before, your body is going through tons of changes with the hormonal influence on your joints and ligaments. Let's discuss how you can manage some of these aches and pains.



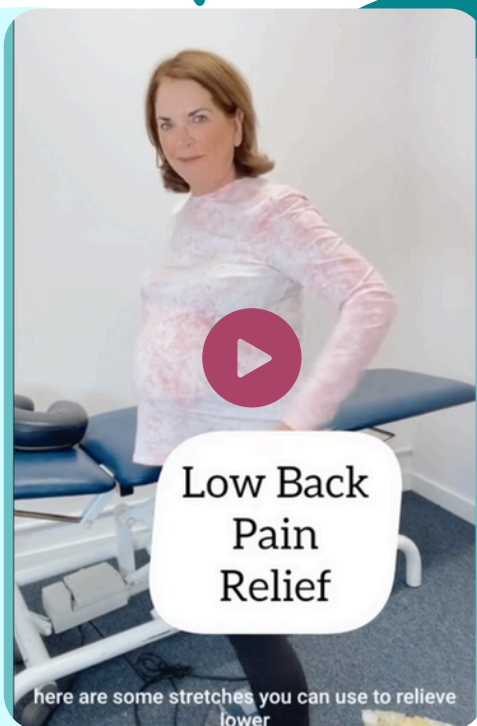
Back Pain

Pain in the lower back is one of the most common problem areas I work with in my physical therapy practice and online coaching.

A lot of pregnant women are told by their health care providers that back pain is just part of pregnancy and there is much you can do for it. NOT TRUE!!!

If you have back pain or any other pain when you are pregnant or postpartum, please get [physical therapy treatment](#).

[Click to play a short video](#) of some simple exercises you can do to try to relieve back pain.

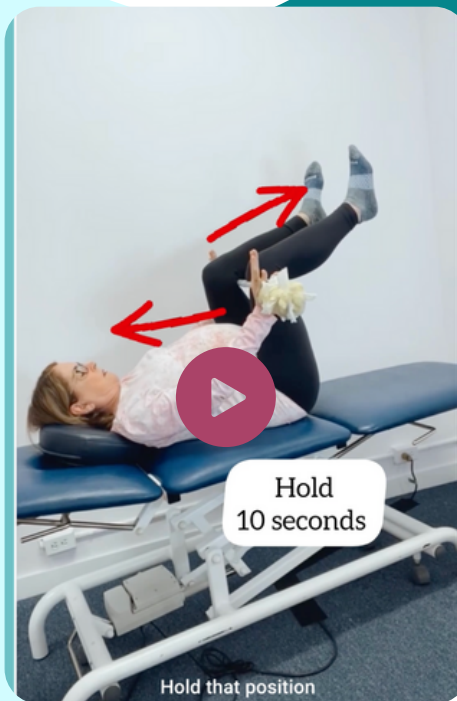


Sacroiliac (SI) Joint Pain

Many pregnant women tell me that they have back pain and point to the sacroiliac joint in the back of the pelvis.

After evaluating them, these women are often surprised when I tell them they do not have back pain, they have pelvic pain and I teach them a few different exercises they can do to relieve the pain.

[Click to play a simple exercise](#) that you may find helpful to relieve SI Joint Pain.



Pelvic Floor Pain

It is common to feel a strain or pain in the bottom of the pelvis in the third trimester. This can be caused by the excess weight and demands placed on it by the growing uterus.

[Click to play a simple exercise](#) you can do to help relieve pelvic floor pain.

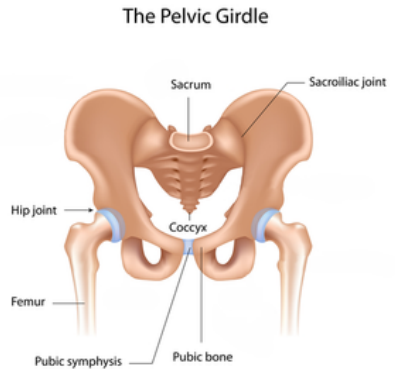


Pubic Symphysis Pain – “Lightening Crotch”

In the front of the pelvis, there is a large cartilage called the pubic symphysis. The loosening effects of the pregnancy hormones makes this area move more than normal and it can cause pain in the front of the pelvis and or the groin.

Things that can cause pubic symphysis pain are:

- Climbing a ladder
- Pushing heavy things with one leg
- Single leg exercises in yoga and other types of exercises
- Rolling in bed without squeezing your knees together
- Swinging your leg to get on a bicycle



[Click to play a short video](#) of some things you can do to get rid of pubic symphysis pain.





Managing Stress

Dealing with stress during the third trimester of pregnancy is important for both your well-being and the well-being of your developing baby. We've touched on the importance of movement, which is beneficial also for managing stress.

Here are some additional tips to help you manage stress during this crucial time.



Practice Relaxation Techniques

Try to incorporate relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation into your daily routine. These techniques can help calm your mind and reduce stress levels.

[Click to play a video of a simple breathing technique](#) that can help reduce stress.



Get Proper Sleep



In the 3rd trimester many women experience “fractured sleep patterns” which can be caused by needing to use the toilet several times per night, or just periods of wakefulness in the middle of the night. Try to create a comfortable sleeping environment by using extra pillows for support, room darkening shades and a sound machine. If possible, try to take a nap during the day to make up for sleep loss.

Prenatal Classes & Professional Support

Consider attending prenatal classes in person or online to make sure you feel prepared for childbirth. Knowing what to expect can help reduce the fear of the unknown. If you are feeling overwhelmed, consider getting professional support from a therapist or counselor who specializes in pregnancy related stress and anxiety.



Healthy Nutrition and Hydration



Dehydration can increase stress levels so make sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day. You might want to try to stop drinking liquids 2 hours before sleeping to prevent the need to pee several times at night, but drink if you are thirsty.

Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Proper nutrition can have a positive impact on your mood and energy levels.



Seek out Physical Therapy

Even if your health care provider may tell you that it is normal to feel pain during pregnancy (eg. Back pain, pelvic pain, hip pain, groin pain, pelvic floor pain or incontinence) it does not mean that you do not deserve getting physical therapy treatment to get pain relief.

I get so upset when my clients tell me their doctor said the pain they are experiencing is just a normal part of pregnancy and it will go away after delivery. This is so unfair and uncaring!

It may be COMMON to have aches and pains during pregnancy, but it is not NORMAL to live with the pain and not seek out pain relief!

If you are in pain or have incontinence, seek out treatment from a [physical therapist that specializes in prenatal care.](#)





EASING YOUR PATH TO MOTHERHOOD

Your Guide to a Comfortable Third Trimester and Beyond

Hi, my name is Marianne Ryan. I am a mom and a physical therapist with a mission to help women feel their best during pregnancy, prepare for labor and delivery and teach new moms how to reclaim their bodies after becoming a mother.

If you got value from this guide, then you will LOVE the other resources I have created for you including:

- 1 [The Baby Bod book](#) - Turn Flab to Fab in 12 Weeks Flat!
- 2 [Private coaching sessions with me](#) Get one-on-one support live with a certified Baby Bod coach.
- 3 [Sign up for the waitlist for "Your First Six Weeks: Postpartum Self-Care"](#) **Get 20% off** the program once launched when you sign up!
- 4 [Baby Bod Facebook group](#) where you will meet other mothers, get advice and be able to share your experiences.

I am so excited to help you thrive during your pregnancy and beyond. Remember, you're not alone in this. I'm here to make sure you have the information and support you need for a fantastic pregnancy journey.

Looking forward to connecting more!

Marianne Ryan
Physical Therapist

Let's stay connected:



[Instagram- @babybodprogram](#)