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GOOD POSTURE FOR PREGNANCY

- Maintaining good posture through pregnancy will prevent excess strain on your joints & ligaments as your baby grows. This will help to prevent back, pelvic, hip and knee pain.
- Always try and draw the deep abdominals inwards to prevent overstretching of your tummy muscles.
- Good posture will also help the baby to get into the right position in the pelvis towards the end of pregnancy.

Abdominal Muscle & Pelvic Floor Exercises for PREGNANCY

Learning to actively contract your DEEP ABDOMINAL muscles will help during pregnancy to support your baby & reduce the strain on your lower back. These “deep abdominals” are called “transversus abdominus” and they wrap around your waist like a corset.

By strengthening these muscles it will help to prevent overstretching of your tummy muscles and help to stabilize the lower back & pelvis- so very important for women with Pelvic Girdle Pain or back pain in pregnancy. By working on these muscles it will also help with post natal recovery of these muscles once the baby is born.

Exercising the PELVIC FLOOR muscles is very important in pregnancy as the hormones and weight of the baby weakens these muscles. By exercising the pelvic floor in pregnancy it will improve your post natal recovery of these muscles also.

To engage your “deep abdominals”:

Try to engage these deep abdominal muscles as often as you can during the day in various positions:

- Place your hands on your lower abdominals & gently draw in the abdominals below your belly button away from your hands
- Do not “hold your breath” while you do this **Try to hold 5-10 seconds Repeat x 5**
- Feel the lower abdominals drawing inwards next to your front hip bones
- You should NOT feel a bulging upwards of these muscles into your hands
- Breathe deep into your ribs while maintaining the lower abdominal contraction
- You may feel your pelvic floor muscles draw up but you DO NOT want a bearing down pressure on the pelvic floor muscles
- It’s good to lift the pelvic floor muscles up with the deep abdominals as they work well together
- Make sure your breathing remains regular while you are holding the deep abdominals

To exercise your “Pelvic Floor Muscles”:

In sidelying, 4 pt kneeling or sitting:

- Lift from the base of your pelvis like you are trying to stop a “wee” or stop “wind”
- Try and hold for **5-8 seconds** and breathe while you are holding a maximum lift_Repeat approx **10 reps**
- If you are unsure if the right muscles are working try and stop a wee midstream on the toilet to see if you are working the muscles (do not do this as an exercise)
- Try also doing 10 quick squeezes of the pelvic floor