



SAMUEL HODGE
PERSONAL TRAINING

**REBUILDING
AFTER
PREGNANCY
GUIDE**

I have created this guide to help you rebuild your body after nine months of growing a little human! The aim here is not to focus solely on fat loss, but to focus on getting you back to being strong, mobile and feeling fit!

It is a general guide and the information I provide in here may not be suitable for everyone post-pregnancy. If you have any doubts or concerns about beginning exercise again, then please consult your doctor or postnatal physiotherapist.

I am a Postnatal Fitness Specialist and a lot of the information I provide here is thanks to Jessie Mundell, who created the qualification I achieved. If you want to check out her Instagram page, her handle is @jessiemandell.

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The First Month Postpartum

The main goal during the first month post partum is to get as much rest as possible. You will want to stay off your feet as often as possible when you're not doing anything to do with looking after your baby.

Because you may be sat or laid down for lengthy periods of time, you may feel that certain areas stiffen up, so you may want to try doing some stretches, as long as you feel comfortable doing so (See Stretches page for some examples of stretches you might find beneficial).

After a couple of weeks, you may feel up to going for walks outside of a shorter duration (5-15 minutes). A key aspect of these walks is to take note of how you feel during the walks and afterwards too. Things to consider:

- more soreness than normal?
- increased bleeding the day after?
- tiredness increased more than normal?

If you answer yes to any of these, then maybe you need to allow a bit more time to recover before you start to go on longer walks and start exercising.

The First Month Postpartum

Towards the end of the month, you may feel that you can slightly increase your outdoor walking time e.g 20 minutes instead of 15 minutes. Again you should keep a note of how you feel the day after your walks.

You also may want to start trying some simple bodyweight exercises, with the aim of gradually beginning to strengthen your core and getting you back moving a bit more.

Below is an example of a session that could be used as your first workout.

Exercise	Set	Reps	Rest
Bodyweight Squat	1	10-12	~60 sec
Glute Bridge	1	10-12	~60 sec
Band Pull Apart	1	10-12	~60 sec
Clam Shell	1	10-12 each side	~60 sec
Heel Slides	1	10-12 each side	~60 sec

The First Month Postpartum

Before you begin the exercises, it is a good idea to practice achieving a connection between your breathing pattern and your core muscles (or your "Connection Breath" as Jessie Mundell terms it).

Learning to get this connection allows you to be in the strongest position possible for whatever alignment your body is in during daily activities (whether that is for carrying your baby, doing some exercises, cleaning up or moving things around the house). Once you have this connection you are then able to manipulate your breathing and the amount of core tension you create in certain situations, which MAY help alleviate some symptoms/feelings of pressure, incontinence or pain in your pelvic area during exercise. Below are a few steps to practice achieving the "Connection Breath".

- Lay on your side, with your head supported and one hand on your ribcage.
- As you inhale, aim to feel a rising of your ribcage, your belly relaxing to the floor and your pelvic floor muscles lengthening/expanding.
- As you exhale, your ribcage will fall, your belly will pull up and away from the floor and you will try to feel a gentle rising of the pelvic floor muscles.

The First Month Postpartum

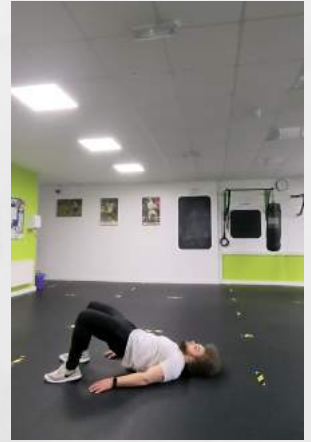
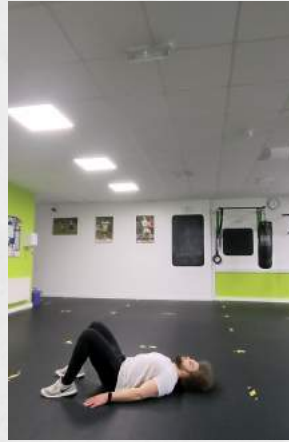
Once you feel you have got that connection on your side. You can lay on your back and then try the following steps.

- Lay on your back, with your tailbone on the floor and hands by your side.
- As you inhale, the aim is to get breath into both your belly and your chest therefore both will rise up gently.
- During this inhalation you should also feel a lengthening of your pelvic floor muscles, as you release any tension from front of the body to the back (towards the anus).
- As you exhale, you are aiming to create some tension in the pelvic floor muscles. To do this, you want to imagine scooping the muscles from the back (anus) towards the front of the pelvis.
- During this action you can also aim to achieving a gentle lifting of the pelvic floor (imagine lifting your belly button upwards towards your sternum).
- The final step which you may want to try adding on, is a gentle pulling inwards action in your lower abdominal area (hip bone to hip bone). For this step you don't need to try too hard, if there is a bulge during this action then try to relax your effort a bit.

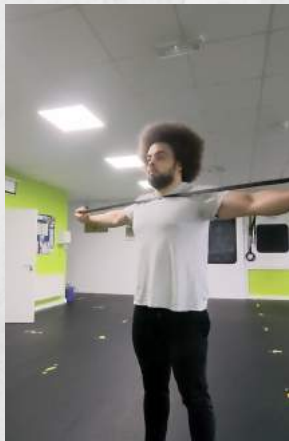
Exercise Photos



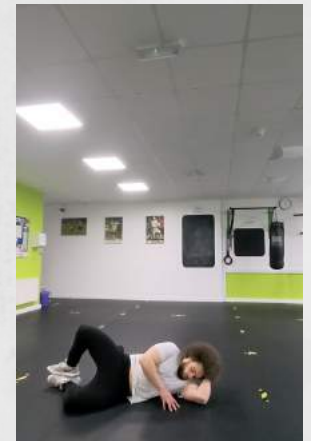
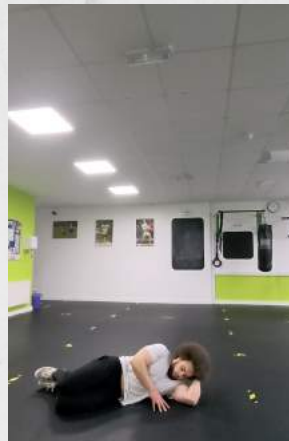
Bodyweight Squat



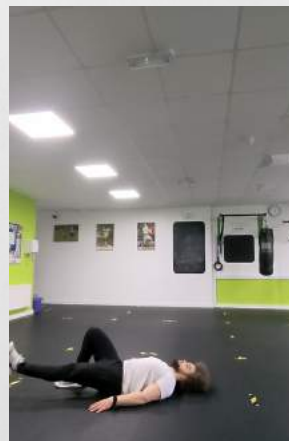
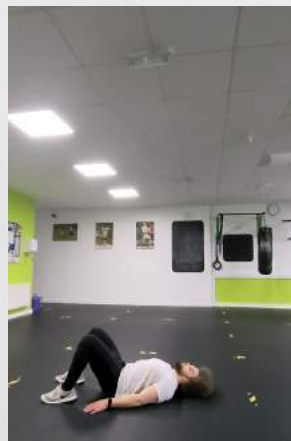
Glute Bridge



Band Pull Apart



Clam Shell

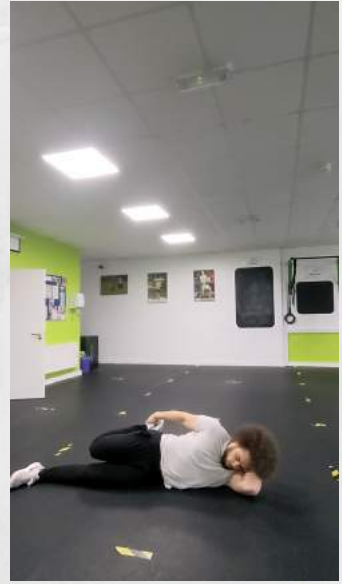


Heel Slide

Stretches



Glute



Quadriceps



Chest



Lower Back



The Second Month

The main aim in the second month is still to allow as much rest as possible whenever you have time to. Baby duties will take up a lot of your activity time and energy levels so resting when you can is key.

It might be a good idea to still include your stretches of tight/stiff areas if you have the time to. If you felt up to it you could progress your stretches into ones a little more challenging (see Further Stretches page).

In terms of your walking, if you have been coping well with your current short walks, you may want to gradually increase the time by 5 minutes every couple of weeks. However, you still need to keep a note of how you feel afterwards. Some days may feel better than others.

Towards the end of the month you may want to begin some basic strength training, so long as you feel up to it and if you have been managing to go on leisurely walks without suffering any symptoms afterwards (or perform some of the bodyweight stuff mentioned in the last section).

The Second Month

Below is an example of a basic strength workout you could try if you felt up to it. During your sessions it would be a good idea to take note of how you are feeling during each exercise and after each exercise. Here are a few things you might want to consider:

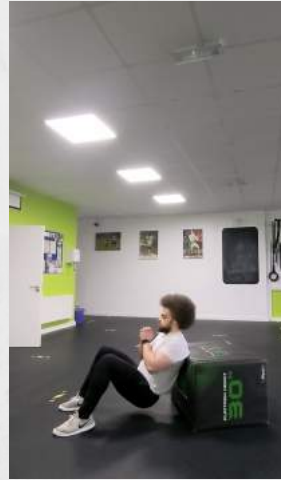
- Do you feel any pain in certain movements?
- Any symptoms of incontinence/pelvic pain during movements?
- Are you taking note of your breathing pattern during the exercises?

Exercise	Set	Reps	Rest
Bodyweight Squat	1-2	12-15	~45 sec
Hip Thrust Off Bench	1-2	12-15	~45 sec
Hand Elevated Press Up	1-2	10-12	~45 sec
Split Squat	1-2	10-12 each side	~45 sec
Heel Slide w/Arms	1-2	10-12 each side	~45 sec

Exercise Photos



Bodyweight Squat



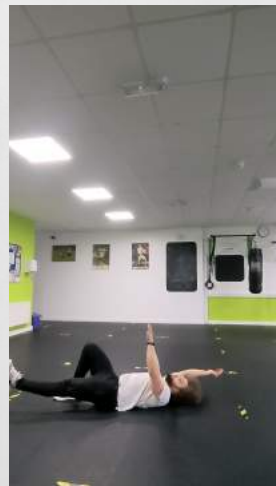
Hip Thrust off Bench



Hand Elevated Press Up



Split Squat



Heel Slide w/Arms

Further Stretches



Hamstring



Hip Flexor Stretch
with Reach



Lat/Upper Back



90/90 Hip Stretch

The Third Month & Beyond

In your third month, the main aim is still the same as previous months. You want to be getting as much rest as possible whenever you can, as baby related tasks will still take up a lot of your energy.

If you have not managed to do much walking up to now, or have not attempted any of the bodyweight stuff mentioned in the first two months, then this could be a good time to try having a go at some of those exercises (if you feel up to it).

However, if you have been managing to be a bit more active than normal (e.g. managing to get on regular walks with no issues and maybe doing some of the exercises in this guide), then you may feel ready to progress a little bit further.

You could try increasing your walk times (if you have been doing 25-30 minute walks, then over the next few weeks you could try add more minutes to each walk so eventually you might be doing 40-50 minutes each time.

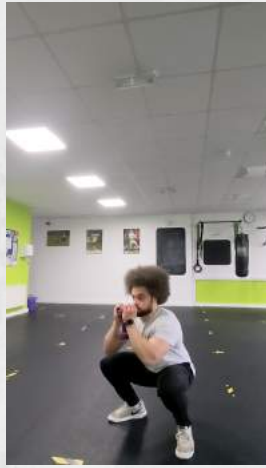
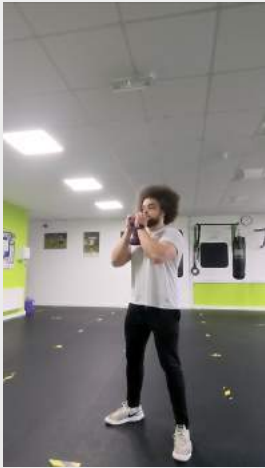
You may also feel ready to do a bit of resistance training. If this is the case, then take a look at the next page for an example workout you could try.

Example Gym Workout

A good rule of thumb is if after these sessions, you feel like you could have done a bit more, then you have worked at the correct intensity. You do not want to be killing yourself in each session just to feel like you have worked hard. Remember this is still a rebuilding process.

Exercise	Set	Reps	Rest
Goblet Squat	2	10-12	~45 sec
RDL	2	10-12	~45 sec
Standing Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	10-12	~45 sec
Single Arm Dumbbell Row	2	10-12 each arm	~45 sec
Split Squat w/DBs	2	10-12 each side	~45 sec
Pallof Press	2	10-12 each side	~45 sec

Exercise Photos



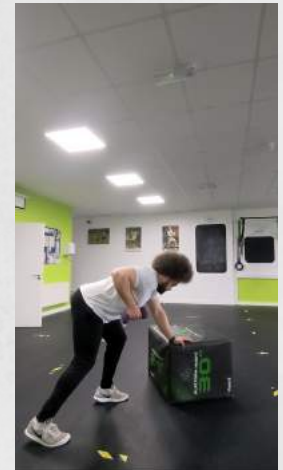
Goblet Squat



RDL



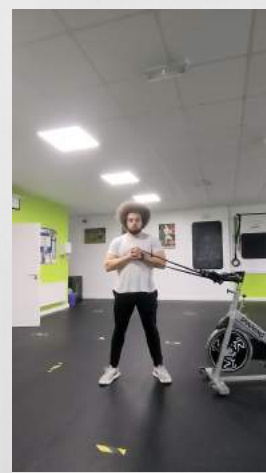
Standing Dumbbell
Shoulder Press



Single Arm
Dumbbell Row



Split Squat w/DBs



Pallof Press

Getting Back to Running

If you enjoy running recreationally, then there are a few considerations you should make before you begin running again. For example:

- How far post partum are you?
- Have you been able to perform any regular strength training before you think about running?
- Are you able to go on walks at a moderate pace without suffering symptoms such as; incontinence, bleeding, pain in the lower back or lower body?
- Do you feel confident with your pelvic floor health?

If you feel uncertain about whether you are ready to start running again, it is probably best to consult with a qualified professional before you begin.

Options for Beginning Running Again

- Hill Walking - up and down hills for repetitions
- Hill Running - short runs up a hill, then walking back down and going again
- Flat Running on Grass - little bit easier on the joints

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide! I hope you found some of the content included useful. As mentioned at the start, the information provided is not intended to replace any advice given by your doctor or postnatal physiotherapist. It was created for you as a general guide to show you how you could possibly progress towards getting back to training, depending on your own personal situations.

If you are interested in receiving one to one postnatal coaching with me, where I will assist you in building a personalised plan for you to rebuild your strength and fitness, then please feel free to contact me through one of the channels below.

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