

## Foundations for Postnatal Recovery

It is important to be aware and lay the foundations of postnatal recovery before getting into exercise to recover and gain optimal function as a new Mum. Here are some key factors to start with:

**Posture and alignment:** take note of your posture; even take a selfie in the mirror. Think about stacking your shoulders over your ribs and your ribs over your hips. Continue to have an awareness of your posture and correct it if you catch yourself out of alignment. Your body will thank you for it.

**Breathing:** become aware of your breathing, do you breathe into your belly or your chest? Place one hand on the side of your ribs and belly and one hand on your shoulders and take a breath, which hand moves? Your hand on your ribs/belly should move, now take note, do you breathe into the front, sides and back of your belly. If not work on this to help improve your deep breathing system. If you continue to breathe into your chest you will end up with a whole heap of tension in your upper body and a poorly functioning core (potential abdominal separation and pelvic floor dysfunction).

**Belly button:** do you notice yourself constantly sucking in your belly button? This is not an ideal habit to maintain, you will notice by doing this that your breathing is not effective as discussed above. It may suck in your 'mummy tummy' but it will not allow your separation or pelvic floor dysfunction to heal effectively as it doesn't allow for effective movement of your entire core system muscles.

**Core training:** deep core training for postpartum ladies must be done carefully; there are a lot of traditional exercises that aren't effective for recovering postpartum bellies. I advise you to perform a self-assessment to check if you have a Diastasis recti (abdominal separation) and monitor throughout your training. Please avoid crunch type exercises where your body is flexing and bulging upwards, exercises where your belly is hanging downwards as you will likely not have the core strength to support it and full planks in the first instance where abdominal pressure is high. Take a look at your core when you exercise, do you notice if there is a doming down the centre of your core.