

A black and white photograph of a woman in a gym setting, performing a plank exercise on a mat. She is wearing a tank top and leggings, and is holding two small dumbbells under her hands. In the background, a young child is walking. The text 'THE POSTNATAL CORE CHALLENGE' is overlaid in the top right corner.

THE POSTNATAL CORE CHALLENGE

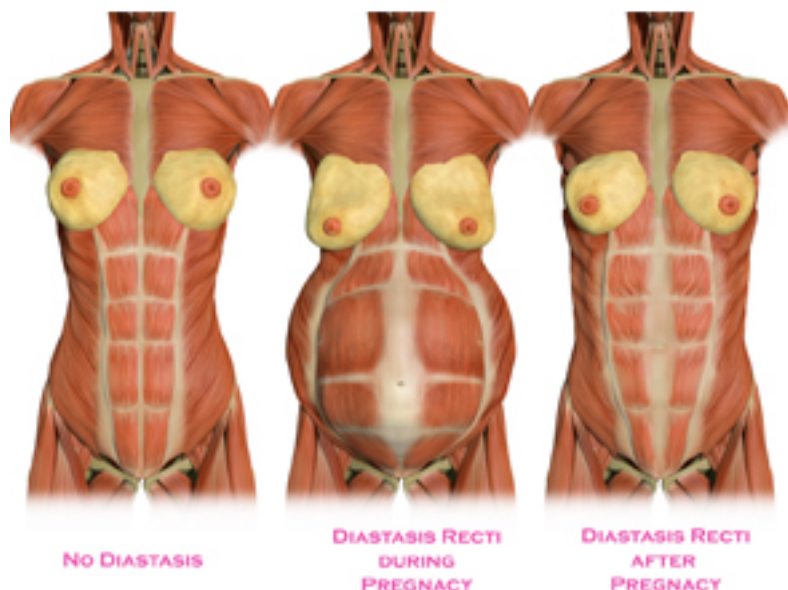
A two week core activation and strengthening challenge for a better looking pain-free you!

Bodylove
PILATES

Your Abs after baby

Returning to abdominal exercises after having a baby is a process and it is different for every woman.

There is no benefit to rushing your recovery – in fact it can make it a much longer more painful journey.



During your pregnancy your abdominals had to separate to make room for the growing uterus – creating a Diastasis Recti or Abdominal Separation.

The Two Week Core Challenge will target the reconnection of your muscles through a series of breathing activation exercises which focus on the Transverse Abdominus and the Pelvic Floor muscles.

The correct firing of these muscles will go a long way to helping you to create a strong foundation for your Pilates practice, reconnection to your core and aid in an over-all pain free and speedy recovery

The Challenge

The BodyLove Pilates 2 week Core challenge provides you with a daily core workout which builds in intensity as you progress.

Dedicate 10 minutes a day to your recovery and reap the rewards;

- ✓ Accelerate the mind/body connection to your core.
 - The core muscles are thinking muscles – meaning you don't actually have to move to engage them. You need to connect your mind with the action of that muscle and it will engage!
- ✓ Fast track your progress to achieve;
 - strength & stability of the powerhouse
 - improve posture
 - Rehab diastasis
 - retrain muscle firing patterns - CORE COMES FIRST! Stability before mobility
 - Correctly prepare you for progression to advanced Pilates exercises

These core exercises - or Fundamentals - form the foundation of the BodyLove Pilates method.

The target muscles are thinking muscles so the repetition of the exercises is key to establishing the strong neural pathways – a vital step to ensure all movement comes from the powerhouse.



The Challenge - SET-UP

WHAT WILL YOU NEED

All you need to get started is a YOGA/PILATES MAT.

RECOMMENDED

We recommend you compliment the core work with spinal mobilization, stretching and release work.

- FOAMROLLER
- THERABAND FOR STRETCHING

OPTIONAL

We use a variety of the below props when doing the breathing exercises.
Find the one that works best for you.

- PHYSIOBALL
- SMALLBALL
- YOGA BLOCK
- BOLSTER



The Challenge - SELF ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is an important element of the BodyLove Pilates method.

Learning how to assess your healing progress is crucial to ensure you are ready for the next phase.

What are you assessing?

Your separation or Diastasis Recti – depth, width and length.

Any greater than 2 fingers is considered dysfunction and rehab must continue.

How do I perform self-assessment?

- Look in the mirror – what is the appearance of the skin? Is there mottling?
- Safely get down on to your back (side first then roll over) with your knees bent, head down.
- Begin to feel down the Linea Alba by gentle pushing into it with your index finger and middle finger together. Beginning at the sternum and go all the way down to just above your pubic symphysis.
- What is the integrity of the connective tissue? Is there tone and resistance or can you push your fingers through.
- Starting with your two fingers pushing into the Linea Alba just below the sternum – Nod your chin and lift your head a little off the ground. Do not try and engage your abdominals – leave them relaxed.
- Can you push fingers? Is there room to add a finger or two? If so repeat exercise with the additional fingers.
- Less than two fingers is considered normal – two fingers or more and this is considered significant and dysfunctional.
- Move down the body repeating the exercise above for each of the following sections – a little above the belly button, on the belly button, just below the button and just above the pubic symphysis.
- Insert picture of me on my back/link to video

We advise you continue Day 10-14 until you have completely closed your diastasis in seated, all fours and supine position.



The Workouts – Days 1-3

Set up: Seated in neutral spine, neutral pelvis – Against a wall, on a small ball & yoga block, on the physio-ball, household flat back chair

1. Diaphragmatic/belly breathing – x 5
2. Hug your baby/belly button to spine – x 10
3. TVA counting to 10 x 3 sets
4. TVA repetitions – 3 x 10 sets
5. PFM Pea up a straw– X 10
6. PFM counting to 10 x 3 sets
7. 10 x quick squeezes
8. 10 x slow squeezes

DAY 3 – DO EXERCISES IN ALL FOURS POSITION

Stretching

1. Hamstring single leg seated stretch – hold 30sec
2. QL single leg seated stretch – hold 30 sec
3. Single leg sidebend stretch – hold 30sec
4. Piriformis stretch against the wall – hold for 30 sec (repeat 2 each side)



The Workouts – Days 4-6

Set up: Seated in neutral spine, neutral pelvis – Against a wall, on a small ball & yoga block, on the physio-ball. Preform final day exercises on all fours – neutral spine/neutral pelvis

1. Diaphragmatic/belly breathing – x 5
2. Hug your baby/belly button to spine – x 5
3. TVA Sideways Elevator - 10
4. TVA repetitions – 2 x 20 reps
5. PFM – Pea up a straw – x 10
6. PFM - Elevator – x 5
7. PFM – Slow squeezes – x 20

DAY 6 – DO EXERCISES IN ALL FOURS POSITION

Supine in neutral spine, neutral pelvis

1. Hug your baby/belly button to spine – x 2
2. Pelvic tilts –x 10

Foam roller

1. Roll out quads and IT band
2. Roll out spine
3. Lie on foam roller for pec release and meditative fundamental breath practice
(Continue with stretches from Days 1-3 if time permits)



The Workouts – Days 7-10

Set up: Seated in neutral spine, neutral pelvis – Against a wall, on a small ball & yoga block, on the physio-ball. Perform day 10 exercises on all fours – neutral spine/neutral pelvis.

1. Diaphragmatic/belly breathing – x 2
2. Hug your baby/belly button to spine – x 5
3. TVA counting to 3 x 20
4. TVA repetitions 2 x 25 reps
5. PFM counting to 3 x 20
6. PFM quick squeezes – 3 x 10 reps

Supine in neutral spine, neutral pelvis

1. Hug your baby/belly button to spine – x 2
2. Pelvic tilts – x 10

Seated side and hamstring stretching



The Workouts – Days 10 -12

Set up: Seated in neutral spine, neutral pelvis – Against a wall, on a small ball & yoga block, on the physio-ball. Perform day 11 & 13 exercises on all fours – neutral spine/neutral pelvis.

1. Diaphragmatic/belly breathing – x 2
2. Hug your baby/belly button to spine – x 5
3. TVA counting to 2 x 25
4. TVA repetitions 2 x 25 reps
5. PFM counting to 2 x 25
6. PFM isolations – 3 x 10 reps

DAY 12 – DO EXERCISES IN ALL FOURS POSITION

Supine in neutral spine, neutral pelvis

1. Hug your baby/belly button to spine – x 2
2. Pelvic tilts –x 10
3. Head float – x10



The Workouts – Days 13 - 14

Set up: Supine – on your back. Neutral spine, Neutral pelvis

1. Diaphragmatic/belly breathing – x 2
2. TVA counting to 1 x 25
3. TVA Isolations 1 x 25 reps
4. PFM counting to 1 x 25
5. PFM isolations – 1 x 25 reps
6. Pelvic tilts –x 10
7. Head float – x 20



Exercise Glossary

Diaphragmatic Breathing/Belly button

INHALE – breathe in through your nose – allowing your abdominals to relax and your belly fill with air.

EXHALE – with an open mouth

Hug your baby/Belly button to spine

INHALE – breathe in through your nose – allowing your abdominals to relax and your belly fill with air.

EXHALE – with an open mouth – draw your belly button in toward your spine

TVA counting

INHALE – breathe in through your nose – allowing your abdominals to relax and your belly fill with air.

EXHALE – with an open mouth – draw your belly button in toward your spine.

Hold your belly button all the way to your spine and count out loud. The vocalizing of the numbers ensures you are taking little sips of air, and NOT holding your breath, maintaining connection to your spine throughout

TVA Repetitions

INHALE – breathe in through your nose – allowing your abdominals to relax and your belly fill with air.

EXHALE – with an open mouth – draw your belly button in toward your spine.



Exercise Glossary

PFM – Diamond hold

INHALE – breathe in through your nose – allowing your abdominals to relax and your belly fill with air.

EXHALE – with an open mouth – Lift your pelvic floor up

PFM counting

INHALE – breathe in through your nose – allowing your abdominals to relax and your belly fill with air.

EXHALE – with an open mouth – Lift your pelvic floor up.

Holding the PFM engagement and count out loud. The vocalizing of the numbers ensures you are taking little sips of air, and NOT holding your breath, maintaining engagement and lift of the muscles throughout.

Pelvic Tilts

INHALE – breathe in through your nose.

EXHALE – with an open mouth – activate your TVA, and then draw your pubic bone toward your sternum, tilting your pelvis backward.

Head Float

INHALE – breathe in through your nose.

EXHALE – with an open mouth – activate your TVA, and then draw your pubic bone toward your sternum, tilting your pelvis backward. Maintaining the connection under your chin and lift ONLY your head.

