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# PREGNANCY & POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL THERAPY



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PRENATAL AND POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL THERAPY

Pregnancy is a time of drastic change for a person's body. Pressure, pain or pelvic discomfort are common symptoms during and after pregnancy. However, that does not always mean they are normal.

Giving birth is one of the most strenuous events in a person's life. Just as marathon runners work to heal their muscles after a race, birthing parents should heal and recover their muscles with the help of a pelvic floor physical therapist.



## PRENATAL PHYSICAL THERAPY

- Techniques to help you and a support person stretch your hips, low back, and upper body in preparation for birth
- Education about postures and safe exercises to do prior to birth to maintain your core, leg, and upper body strength
- Soft tissue techniques to decrease tension in your muscles
- Demonstration of proper body mechanics for lifting and carrying a newborn
- A one-time prenatal visit is recommended before you deliver to answer any questions, address concerns, and develop a road map for postpartum physical therapy (PT) and recovery

## CONDITIONS WE TREAT

- Dyspareunia (pain with vaginal penetration)
- Back, hip, musculoskeletal pain
- Diastasis rectus (abdominal separation)
- Return to sport including running, weightlifting, or other wellness activities
- Vaginal heaviness or lower abdominal pressure (prolapse)
- Bladder or bowel symptoms including leakage or urgency
- C-section scar pain or tightness

## POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL THERAPY

- Assessment of pelvic floor strength and education on proper ways to heal after delivery
- Education related to postpartum healing and pelvic floor dysfunction that may have occurred after giving birth
- Soft tissue techniques to help with tight muscles, scar tissue, and trigger points that have developed after birth
- Progression of home exercises to safely improve muscle strength and coordination
- Discussion of goals for fitness during postpartum recovery
- 4-6 PT visits are recommended after you are cleared by your medical provider to see a physical therapist (approximately 6 weeks postpartum)

## MORE INFORMATION

- Sessions are one-on-one with a physical therapist up to 1 hour in length
- Pelvic floor physical therapists are specialists who have received additional training on pelvic floor dysfunctions
- Wear comfortable clothing to your PT session
- Your baby is always welcome during PT sessions