

Restore your Core

6 WEEK
PLAN

A 6 week plan to strengthen and repair your core and pelvic floor whilst flattening your stomach.



By Lydia Rees
& Amelia Gardent

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Lydia Rees

Lydia Rees is a published fitness expert who has a passion for empowering women through health and fitness, helping them become the best versions of themselves through training, mindset and nutrition. Lydia is a mum of two young boys, Louis and Tripp, she is a specialist in pre and post partum fitness, Lydia has helped hundreds of women transform their bodies after having children and guided them through training while pregnant.

Her back ground is in sport and she studied this in University. She is a level 3 Personal Trainer and qualified in pre and post natal training.

Lydia has competed at world level in the fitness bikini category within the IFBB federation. She has has featured in Flex Magazine, Muscular Development Magazine, Muscle and Fitness Magazine , as well as being featured on the 12 week muscle building video on Bodybuilding.com

Amelia Gardent

Amelia is a Mum and Pilates teacher with 14 years experience. Her passion for exercise and fitness started when she was an International athlete (400m hurdles).

After completing a Bsc Hons degree, she went on to do many Pilates and exercise qualifications, including Prenatal-Postnatal Pilates.

Amelia's experience of teaching Pilates is vast, including numerous professional male and female athletes, professional and international sports teams, and a collaboration with the Sports Council for Wales. Amelia also appears on a global health and fitness television channel.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our E book! We are excited that you have decided to let us help you on your journey to **Restore Your Core**.

Firstly, we would like to say congratulations on the birth of your little one! It is time to enjoy quality time with your little bundle of joy.

In today's society, it is easy to look at social media and compare your body to those mums online who have got their figure back within months. Although this is not realistic for the majority of us, getting back in shape after having your little one is achievable with the correct exercises and nutrition plan.

Your body has gone through a lot throughout pregnancy. Strengthening and healing your core and pelvic floor, whilst flattening your stomach, is your next step in getting back your pre-pregnancy body.

Lydia

"When I had my first child Louis ten years ago I wasn't really sure what I should know about the post natal period. Six weeks after having him I was back in the gym, lifting weights and doing high impact activities. Not only did this cause my tummy not to heal but I had the embarrassment of wetting myself. If only I had followed a guide like this after having Louis. Since having Tripp 12 weeks ago my outlook has completely changed, I followed this plan for 6 weeks and already feel stronger and my core tighter, I have not experienced any incontinence and I cannot wait to get back in the gym"

Myself and Amelia will guide you through the best exercises to do (and what to avoid) at each stage of your post pregnancy recovery.

As mums, we know all too well how busy you are. That's why we've designed a programme that is easily achievable and realistic enough to be fitted in around your many other commitments. You will safely strengthen your core and flatten your stomach by doing the right exercises.

Your body has done an amazing thing, now it's time to help it heal and repair to make you as strong and healthy as you can be and ready to take on life as a new mum.

You're not alone, we'll help you through this next challenging stage, one small, realistic step at a time, and we guarantee you'll quickly see and feel the benefits!

CAN I DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

Postpartum core training needs to be done **RIGHT** to help heal the musculature and connective tissue which has been stretched and stressed through pregnancy, labour, and birth (vaginal or C-section).

For example, do you know that if you simply draw the abdomen in without engaging the pelvic floor muscles, you can put excessive downward pressure on the pelvic floor and cause serious damage?

Unfortunately, many women jump into dangerous and damaging abdominal training soon after baby is born because they think, or have been told, that traditional core exercises will help to re-strengthen their body and “get their abs back”.

There are so many conflicting plans telling you what to do after giving birth, so how do you know what is best for you? Some advice can be damaging. Did you know that doing situps and crunches in the quest to get a flat tummy can do more harm than good?. The reason to avoid these exercises is so that you don't put any additional stress on the recovering tissue. Too much too soon can cause injury.



WHY DO I STILL LOOK PREGNANT?

Lydia

"After giving birth to Louis I remember looking at my tummy and I still looked pregnant months after giving birth. I remember thinking this isn't right. I had lost the majority of my weight everywhere else but still looked pregnant and my back hurt. It did not really make sense, I exercised, ate healthily but still had this pooch. I just accepted that my body was just that way as I had given birth.

It wasn't until my friend suggested that I go to the doctors because it could be Diastasis Recti, of course I had never heard of this condition but went along to the doctors regardless to get myself checked out. Low and behold I was told that I had Diastasis Recti."

WHAT IS DIASTASIS RECTI?

Diastasis recti is a separation of the abdominal wall where the connective tissue runs directly down the centre of your tummy.

During pregnancy the connective tissue between your abdominal muscles thins, causing your muscles to separate and your abdomen to leave a gap that your stomach pushes out through. The stretching of the muscles and linea alba makes them significantly weaker and unable to offer adequate stability to the spine (which could lead to lower back problems during pregnancy).

It is thought that many, if not all women experience some degree of abdominal separation and expansion of the abdominal wall in pregnancy because of the growing baby.

This can result in a rounded, protruding belly otherwise known as a 'pooch' or a 'mummy tummy', you may, as I did, even look pregnant months after giving birth, if this is the case you may be suffering from or the medical term Diastasis Recti.

Diastasis Recti does not really come up in conversation as many women are not even aware that they have this after they have given birth.

Mums just accept their tummies are going to be like that forever as "That's what happens after having children, or maybe I don't train hard enough" it may be that you are suffering from Diastasis Recti. The good news is it does not have to be that way.

It's so important to rebuild these muscles as they hold in your internal organs and stabilise your core.

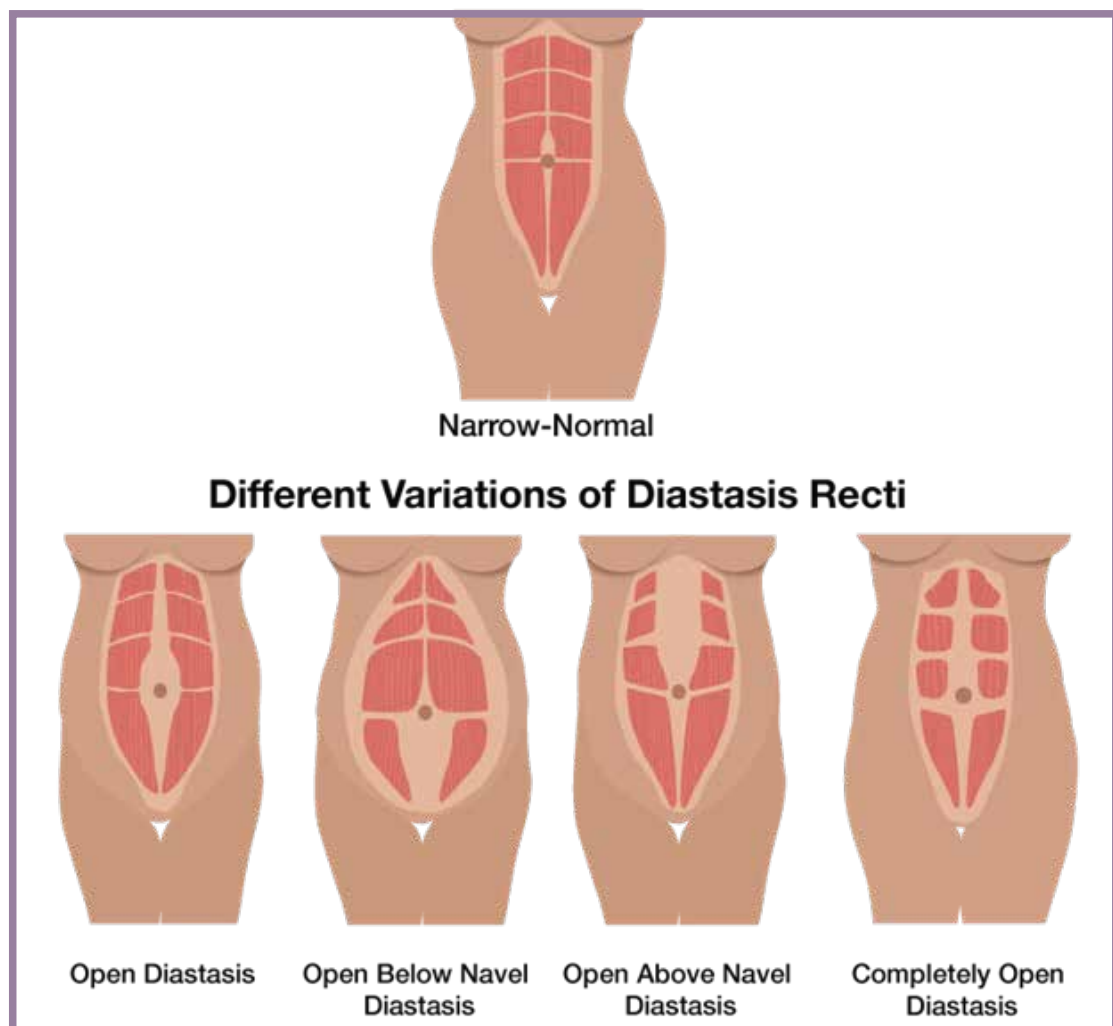
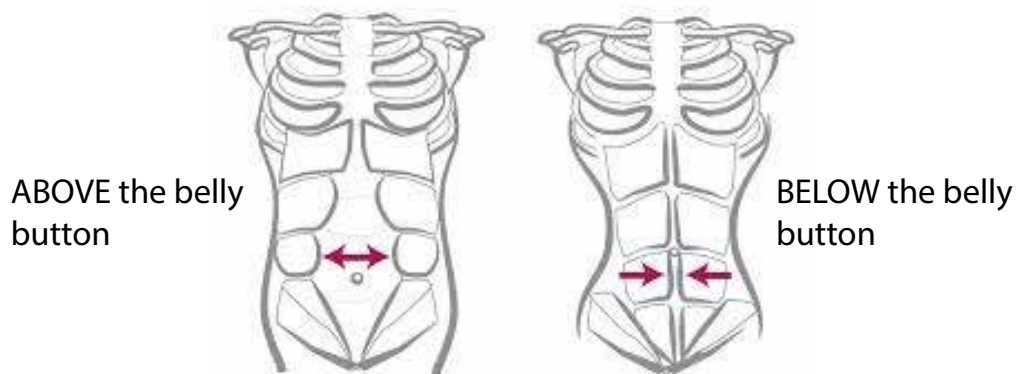
Without doing this you will not be able to flatten your stomach until this issue is addressed. Both myself and Amelia suffered from this condition and fixed it through this plan, so we thought we would share it with you via this e book.



DIFFERENT VARIATIONS OF DIASTASIS RECTI

There are several different variations of DR. What differentiates them is the location where the separation occurs.

Open diastasis occurs on the navel, and completely open diastasis occurs throughout the abs. Below navel diastasis and above navel diastasis are two more variations. As the names suggest, these occur below and above the belly button, respectively.



Images WebMed.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE DIASTASIS RECTI?

The most common symptom of Diastasis Recti is a pooch or bulge in your stomach, especially when you strain or contract your abdominal muscles. Additional symptoms include:

Lower Back Pain

When the internal abdominal wall is weak and a diastasis creates more disconnection, the lack of support for the spine causes the body to collapse. This places the spine in a rounded and strained position contributing to that achey low back.

Pelvic Floor Issues (Which we will look at in depth later on in the book)

Do you find yourself leaking urine when jumping, sneezing or even running? The majority of people do not realise how a weak pelvic floor is directly connected to a weak internal core and poor pelvic alignment. Diastasis recti contributes to the inability of the transverse abdominals to effectively support the abdominal organs, allowing them to rest too low in the pelvic bowl. This extra pressure pushes down on the pelvic floor placing too much demand on the sphincters responsible for controlling the flow of urine and that is when the leaking occurs!

Bloating

Diastasis recti weakens the abdominal wall and the thin connective tissue provides little to no support for the abdominal organs. Without the strong support, the organs protrude outward creating that stubborn poochy tummy

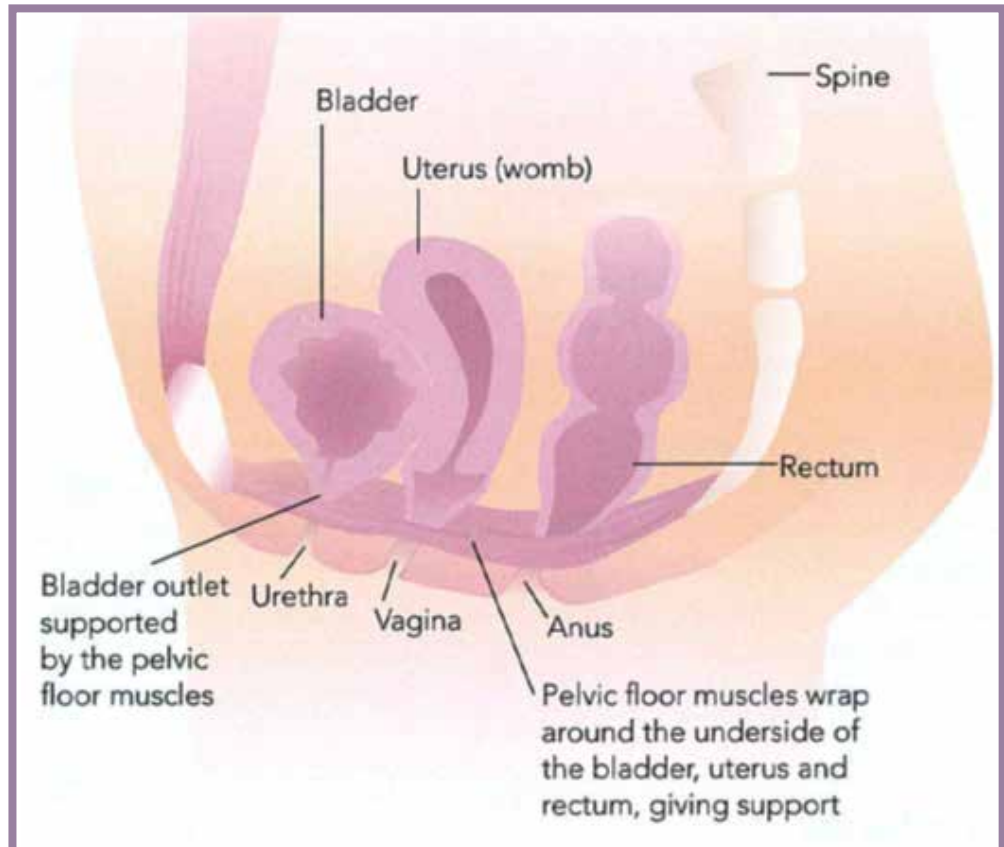
So How Do I Check?

To check for Diastasis Recti, simply lie on your back, contract your abdominal muscles and press gently into your abdomen above and below your navel. Tuck your chin towards your chest and *slowly* lift your head off the floor. Only your head should come off the floor. Keep your shoulders down. This isn't a crunch, just a "head lift." If you can feel a soft spot or gap between the muscles, then you do have a separation. One to two finger-widths is normal and should close on its own. If your gap is wider than three finger-widths, please contact a physical therapist to ensure proper closing of the gap.

WHAT IS MY PELVIC FLOOR AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

Your pelvic floor is a web of muscles, ligaments and tissues that stretch across your pelvic bones. It does the important job of supporting your pelvic organs, which include your :

- womb (uterus)
- vagina
- bladder
- bowels



Some people describe the pelvic floor as being like a trampoline since it stretches in response to weight, and bounces.

Why are the pelvic floor muscles so important and what do they do?

Your pelvic floor muscles

- Support pelvic organs, abdominal contents and the growing baby in pregnancy
- Have a sphincteric action and maintain continence
- Help to prevent prolapse

Ideally all the muscles of the 'core' will work together: pelvic floor, abdominal, back and breathing muscles. However, this is not the case for many women, especially after childbirth.

Your pelvic floor muscles go through a lot during pregnancy and birth. They are stretched during pregnancy due the weight of your baby. When it comes to labour there is additional pressure on your muscles and they again become stretched .

When your pelvic floor is weakened or damaged, you may leak pee, wind and, more rarely, poo. So this is why it is so important to start your pelvic floor exercises as soon as possible after you have given birth.

If you do suffer from a weak pelvic floor you may find it harder to squeeze the muscles and sphincters at the bottom of the bladder allowing for pee to escape, whether you want it to or not! It may also cause a person to feel a heavy, dragged down sensation since their bladder, bowel and uterus aren't being properly supported.

We might often accidentally pee a little bit unintentionally when we cough, sneeze, or even exercise. So if you are planning on getting back to your exercise regime that is why it is important you address your pelvic floor muscles first.

Lydia

"I got back into exercise pretty soon after having my first baby, he was 8lb 9 oz, so he was a pretty hefty baby. I remember going for a run 6 weeks after having him and I peed my pants. This time around the first thing I addressed was my pelvic floor muscles."

RESTORE YOUR CORE EXERCISE GUIDE

This is a 6 week programme that adds new exercises each week but feel free to repeat exercises from previous weeks. If you find anything especially challenging, it would be a good idea to keep doing it the following week(s) until you master it.

It may take you longer than 6 weeks to complete the whole programme, that's fine. Go at your own pace, keep your workouts regular but also realistic considering your time constraints.

The sets and reps are a general guide and you may manage a little more some days and a little less on other days. How much you do will depend on what strength point you're at when you start. It's a good idea to note down how much you're getting done each week and how you're finding it. You can look back in later weeks and see how far you've come and how your efforts are paying off.

Keep your training as consistent as you can and you will keep progressing and getting stronger. Remind yourself why you're doing this and what your motivations are. Aim to do your weekly plan 3-4 times per week.

Pelvic floor muscle exercises will be part of your programme every week. It's best to perform them regularly throughout the day.

The following exercises are by far the most important and helpful thing you can do to strengthen and repair your pelvic floor. Many doctors will even encourage women to start doing these in hospital after giving birth. These exercises are even more important if you plan to return to exercise 6 - 8 weeks post birth as a functional pelvic floor is necessary for most forms of exercise.

WEEK 1



1. Lie on your back with your knees bent.

Exhale : Tighten your pelvic floor muscles. The feeling is one of a squeeze **AND LIFT**. Imagine that you are stopping yourself urinating mid-stream at the same time. Once you've tightened your pelvic floor, gently pull your belly button **IN AND UP** as your pelvis gently tilts forwards. You should feel your lower tummy muscles tighten.

Hold : 10 secs without holding your breath (this is the hard bit!).

Concentrate on contracting the muscles below the belly button without either flattening the lower back into the floor, or arching it - find a position between the two.

Slowly relax your muscles.

Wait at least 5 seconds.

Repeat : 5-10 times.

Avoid : Moving your back, over-tightening the tummy muscles above your waist, or squeezing your buttocks together.



When you're able to do this without arching or flattening your back, you're able to stabilize the pelvis and move on to more exercises.

You're doing fine if you can only hold a squeeze for a second or 2 in the early days. Build up over the coming weeks, aim to hold your tummy muscles in for 10 seconds or more by the time your baby is 6 weeks old.

2. Lie on the floor with legs out in a comfortable V shape.

Contract the pelvic floor muscles as described above.



3. Stand tall and place your hands on something for balance.

Lift your heels whilst contracting and lifting the pelvic floor muscles.

Reps : 10

Hold : 5-10 secs at the top of the move.

Repeat : 5-10 times.



4. Sit with your hands on the floor behind you, straight legs, and flexed feet.

Point the toes and contract the pelvic floor muscles.

Hold : 10 secs

Repeat : 5-10 times



Important:

Don't push down with your muscles, draw up and in instead.

Don't hold your breath.

Relax your shoulders.

Gradually squeeze each time and increase the tension until you have contracted the muscles as hard as you can. Release gently and slowly.

WEEK 2



Once you've mastered the exercises in week 1, you can move onto the following exercises as early as 1 week after delivery, if your doctor is happy for you to do so. This can be longer after a c-section so check with your doctor to find out when you're ready. Remember to lift and squeeze your pelvic floor muscles and never force them down or out

Aim to eventually work up to doing 2-3 sets of each moves, 3-4 times a week.

1. Pelvic floor exercises from week 1 – choose a pelvic floor exercise to do each day of this week.

2. “Hollowing Out” your Abs

This is a simple transverse abdominal contraction. Your transverse abdominals are the most interior abdominal muscles and are extremely important when it comes to core stability and posture. Getting these deep abdominal muscles moving is a great way to begin to repair core muscles that were overstretched and weakened during pregnancy. Draw your belly button up and in towards your spine and ‘hollow out’ your stomach.

Hold : 5 - 10 secs, build up to 20 secs when you can.

These are great to do as you are feeding your baby, as they encourage correct feeding posture.

You can try them seated, standing, or sat on a ball.

You can perform your pelvic floor muscle exercises at the same time

3. Leg lifts

Lie on you back with knees bent

Inhale : Lift a foot off the floor, with knee still bent

Exhale : Return foot to the floor and change the foot

Reps : 5-10 each leg

Keep lower stomach as flat as possible

Don't hold your breath



4. Abdominal tightening with head lift

Create a strong core and tight pelvic floor muscles as you did for the first stage of this exercise in week 1.

Keep your arms on the floor next to you throughout the exercise.

Exhale : Gently raise head and backs of the shoulders up off floor whilst scooping stomach up and in.

Do not arch the lower back.

Do not lift suddenly, the movement should be smooth.

This exercise is **NOT** a crunch. Don't be tempted to lift too high or force/jerk up.

Focus on lifting the head mainly and taking the chin up and in towards the chest. Imagine a strong core with a head lift, **NOT** an abdominal crunch.

Hold at the top for an inhalation.

Exhale : Lower head back down under complete control and without pushing abdominals out or down.

Reps : Up to 10

Sets : 3



5. Stand ups

This exercise will work your thigh muscles and buttocks, but your main focus should be on squeezing and lifting the pelvic floor.

Sit on a chair with knees and feet at hip width, back straight and arms out in front of you.

Exhale: Simply stand up but as you do so, perform a pelvic floor muscles contraction and squeeze your glutes as you push through the back half of your feet. Draw your stomach up and in and keep the movement under control (this is harder to do than it seems!).

Inhale: Stand tall, strong and stable.

Exhale : Lower yourself back down to the chair, again under total control and whilst performing a pelvic squeeze.

Reps: Up to 10 (Doing fewer reps properly will be more beneficial than doing more rushed reps)

Sets: 3

Avoid : Jerking up too quickly with momentum. Tipping forward over your toes. Arching your back. Sticking your head out. Tightening up your shoulders.

To make this exercise harder, you could raise your arms to vertical as you stand up.

For an extra challenge, have them up the whole time (always forming a straight line from hips to hands.)



WEEK 3



1. Pelvic floor exercises – Choose two exercises from your week 1 program to do every day during this week. Ideally one in the morning and one later in the day.

2. Leg slides

Lie on your back with legs bent.

Exhale : Draw up and in from the pelvic floor muscles as usual and begin to straighten a leg out to where you can still maintain a strong core and not arch your lower back. Place your foot back down and repeat on the other leg.

Work up to straightening the leg just a few inches off the floor.

Reps : 5 each leg, building up to 10 each leg/20 total.

Sets : 2

For extra abdominal support, especially if you have had a caesarean, place both hands over your abdomen and provide light support in an inwards direction from your hip bones towards your belly button.



3 . Knee to chest :

Lie on you back with knees bent. Prepare pelvic floor muscles and abdominals as usual.

Exhale : Draw one bent knee into your chest (you may ease the knee closer with your hands if you need to)

Inhale : Hold position

Exhale : Return foot to the floor without arching your back and whilst maintaining the tension in your core muscles. Repeat with the other leg.

Reps : 5-10 each leg

Sets : 2

Keep lower stomach as flat as possible

Don't hold your breath



4. Seated arm lifts + assisted sit backs:

Sit up on the base of your spine with your back straight and core strong.

Exercise a)

Exhale : Maintain a strong posture and raise your arms up to horizontal (or to vertical if you can without losing your posture)

Inhale : Lower arms back down

Keep the stomach as flat as possible as your arms lift and always draw up and in from the pelvic floor muscles.

Reps : 10

Sets : 3



Exercise b) Assisted sit backs:

Place your hands on the backs of your thighs.

Exhale : Gently lean back a little in a controlled movement. Your core should feel strong and supportive.

Keep the stomach as flat as possible as you move and continue to draw up and in from the pelvic floor muscles.

Inhale : Hold the position (if comfortable)

Exhale : Sit back up to an upright position with a straight and strong back.

Reps : 5 - 10 (stay in your comfort zone)

Sets : 1



WEEK 4



1. Pelvic floor exercises –Choose three exercises from your week 1 program to do throughout the day, every day during this week.

2. Side lying knee to chest :

Lie on your side with an elbow bent under your shoulder and legs comfortably bent. Contract and squeeze pelvic floor muscles and abdominals.

Exhale : Bring top knee towards your chest, hold for a second. Return your leg back to the start position.

Reps : 10 each side

Sets : 2



3. Glute bridge plus vertical arm lift :

Lie on your back, knees bent. Squeeze and lift pelvic floor muscles.

Exhale : Using glutes, lift hips up to form a straight line from knees to chest whilst also raising arms up to vertical.

Try to keep hips central throughout the lift.

Inhale : Hold stable at the top.

Exhale : Gently lower hips and arms back down without any movement from side to side. Don't rush.

Reps : 10

Sets : 2



4. Side lying single leg lifts :

Lie on your side with feet stacked on top of each other.

Rest your head on your upper arm (bend arm if more comfortable) and relax neck.

Place the fingertips of your other hand on the floor in front of you.

Draw your lower waist that is against the mat up off the floor towards your centre and belly button.

Exhale : Draw pelvic floor and abdominals up and in towards your spine and raise top leg.

Inhale : Lower leg back down to gently touch the bottom leg again.

Try to keep the moving leg in line with your head instead of letting it move forwards or backwards.

If you feel very unstable, try bending the bottom leg, or placing your stabilizing hand flat on the floor.

Reps : 10-15

Sets : 3



WEEK 5



1. Pelvic floor exercises – choose at least 3 of your pelvic floor exercises from week 1 and repeat them regularly throughout this week.

2. Double leg lifts:

Lie on your side with feet stacked on top of each other.

Rest your head on your upper arm (bend arm if more comfortable) and relax your neck.

Place the fingertips of your other hand on the floor in front of you.

Draw your lower waist up off the floor towards your centre and belly button.

Exhale : Draw pelvic floor and abdominals up and in towards your spine and raise both legs.

Inhale : Hold position strong.

Exhale : Lower legs back down to gently touch the bottom leg again.

Try to keep the legs in line with your head instead of letting them move forwards or backwards.

Reps : 10-15

Sets : 3



3. Knees to chest :

Lie on your back with your knees bent.

Exhale : Draw your knees in to your chest whilst easing lower back down to the floor and drawing pelvic floor muscles up and in.

Inhale : Keep knees close to the chest.

Exhale : Lower your feet back down to the floor without arching the lower back or letting your stomach push out.

Keep shoulders and neck relaxed by keeping the tension in the core.

You can make this exercise harder by progressively placing your feet further and further away from your buttocks as your core muscles get stronger.

Reps : 10

Sets : 3



4. Exercise ball - arm and core workout :

Sit on an exercise ball (or the edge of a chair if you don't have one) with legs at hip distance or a little wider. Keep pelvis central, back and neck straight and long, and core stable.

Exercise a)

Raise arms out to the sides and draw small, controlled circle whilst keeping the rest of the body strong and still. Perform a pelvic floor squeeze each time you exhale.

Change direction and repeat. Try with palms facing up sometimes and down other times.

Reps : 10 - 20 in each direction



Exercise b)

Exhale : Bring arms forward until hands touch and press palms together as you perform a pelvic floor muscles squeeze.

Inhale : Open arms out again into a gentle chest stretch.

Reps : 10



5. Sit backs :

Sit with knees bent and arms stretched out in front of you.

Exhale : Gently lean back as far as you comfortably can whilst staying in control. Your core should feel strong and your shoulders relaxed. Keep the stomach as flat as possible as you move and continue to draw up and in from the pelvic floor muscles.

Inhale : Hold the position (if comfortable)

Exhale : Sit back up to an upright position with a straight and strong back. You could also raise your arms up for an extra challenge.

Reps : 5 - 10 (stay in your comfort zone)

Sets : 1

As you become stronger, you can gradually increase how far you lean back. In future weeks, when you can eventually go all the way back to a 45 degree angle in a smooth and controlled movement, then you can fold your arms across your chest for an increased challenge



WEEK 6



1. Pelvic floor exercises – Aim to do all 4 of your pelvic floor exercises from week 1 this week. Spread them out regularly throughout the week.

2. Glute bridge + double arm lift and hold:

Lie on your back, knees bent. Squeeze and lift pelvic floor muscles.

Exhale : Using your glutes, lift hips up to form a straight line from knees to chest. When you are stable in this position, take your arms back to the floor behind your head.

Hold : For up to 5 breaths before lowering your arms and hips back down in a slow, controlled movement.



3. Modified side plank :

Lie on your side with an elbow under your shoulder and knees comfortably bent.

Exhale : Squeeze and lift through the pelvic floor as you push hips up, keeping knees down. Feel your abdominals contracting to help lift you.

Inhale : Hold position strong.

Exhale : Return to the mat in a smooth, controlled motion.

Reps : 10

Sets : 3

Don't arch your back or put more weight than necessary onto your shoulder.



4. Exercise ball - arm and core workout:

Sit on an exercise ball with legs at hip distance or a little wider. Keep pelvis central, back and neck straight and long, and core stable.

Exercise 4a

Exhale : Lift arms up to vertical whilst keeping your back straight and your core strong.

Hold : Take up to 5 deep breaths without moving hips and then slowly lowering arms.



Exercise 4b

Raise one foot off the floor and hold for up to 5 breaths. Perform a pelvic floor squeeze each time you exhale.

If you can't hold a stable position then try alternating feet without a hold.

To make the exercise harder you can hold the arms at vertical.



WHAT SHOULD I BE EATING?

We all know how easy it is to get tired and overwhelmed once you have had your little one. After giving birth, it is a great time to re-evaluate your nutritional needs. An adequate diet is especially important to help ensure your health and to supply you with the energy necessary to care for your new baby.

The key to your energy isn't just how much (or little) you sleep each night, but instead, what's on your plate. One of the main things a healthy diet can do is give new moms energy.

It's important to spread food throughout the day so that you get an even amount of calories. This will give you lasting power to take care of your baby and yourself.



What Should Your Diet Consist Of?

A woman, pregnant or not, requires basic nutrients. When you eat foods rich with nutrients, you'll notice that your calories go a long way. You'll feel fuller longer, and will have the get-up-and-go mentality you need for those 3 a.m. feeding calls.

Fuel up on:-

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Lean protein, like fish, beef, and soy foods
- Dairy — choose skim or low-fat milk
- Leafy greens
- Iron, especially if you suffer from postpartum symptoms. You can find this in things like fortified cereals, prune juice, and lean meats.
- Vitamin C, which can help with wound healing for mothers who delivered via C-section. Find this in oranges, tomatoes, and natural fruit juices.
- Make sure your diet is high in fibre
- Keep your water intake to a good level
- Eat little and often throughout the day to keep your metabolism firing, don't skip meals or go too long without eating.

Importance Of Nutrition

So, taking that into consideration we have put together a sample food plan for you to follow to help you get back on track.

Breakfast Overnight Oats

Ingredients

- 50 grams of Oats
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon almond butter or peanut butter
- ½ cup milk of choice for a very thick consistency
- Frozen blueberries or raspberries, or sliced fresh strawberries to top
- Drizzle of maple syrup or honey, if desired

Pop in a jar, leave overnight in the fridge and enjoy

Snack Greek Yogurt with almonds to top.



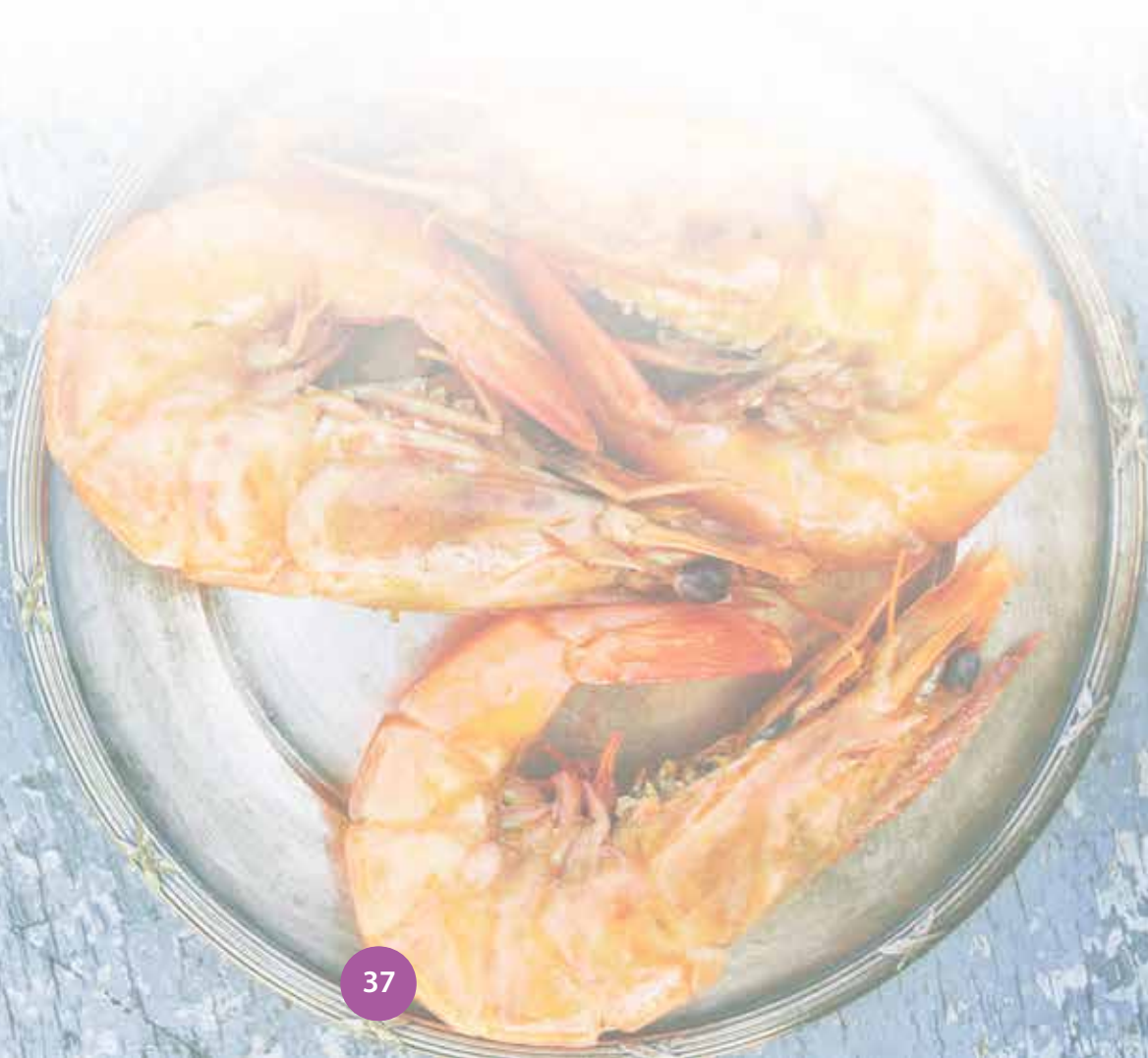
Lunch Prawn Stir Fry

Ingredients:

- 1 cup prawns, shelled
- 1/2 cup edamame, shelled and steamed
- 1/3 cup broccoli florets, chopped
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1/2 cup brown rice, cooked

Directions:

In a pan over low-medium heat, sauté prawns until cooked. Add edamame and broccoli. In a small bowl, combine soy sauce, sesame oil. Drizzle the sauce over the stir-fry. Serve with a side of brown rice.

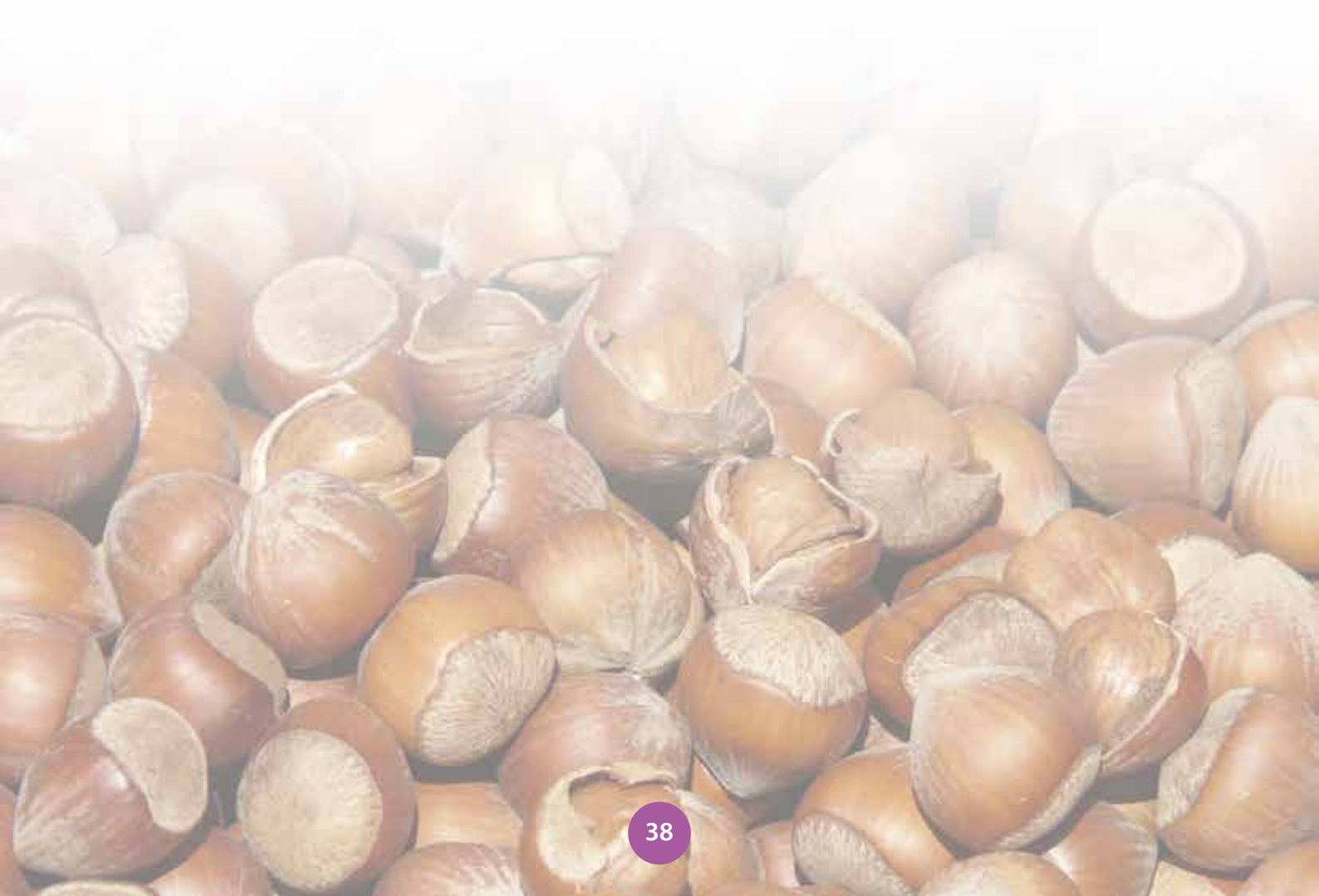


Snack Chocolate Energy Balls

- 1/2 hazelnuts
- 15 dates, pitted and roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon water

Directions:

1. Put pecans in food processor and pulse until roughly chopped.
2. Add remaining ingredients, turn food processor on until well mixed.
3. Using a tablespoon measure, spoon out mixture and roll in balls.
4. Place on a parchment covered baking sheet and refrigerate for at least thirty minutes, until they harden.



Dinner Coconut Chicken Fingers

Coconut-Curry Chicken Fingers with Cashews

Makes: 6 servings. Prep time: 10 minutes. Cook time: 10 minutes

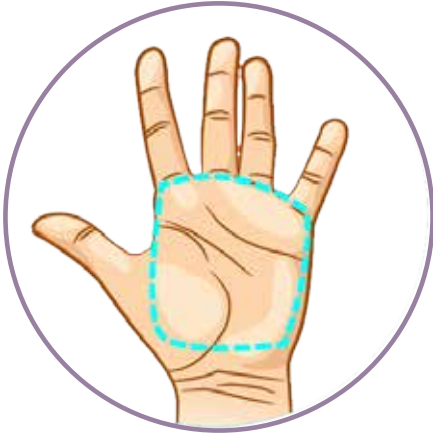
Ingredients:

- 2 pounds of chicken breasts,
- 1/4 teaspoon himalayan salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/4 cups light coconut milk
- 1 cup skim milk
- 3 1/2 tablespoons red curry paste
- 3/4 cup roasted, salted cashews
- 3/4 cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- 3/4 cup cornflakes
- 1 10-ounce bag baby spinach

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease a large baking sheet.
2. Cut the chicken into 3-by-1/2-inch strips; season with salt and pepper.
3. Whisk together one cup of the coconut milk, the skim milk, and 1 1/2 tablespoons curry paste.
4. In a food processor, pulse together the cashews and coconut until finely chopped. Add the cornflakes and pulse until coarse.
5. One by one, dip the chicken strips in the coconut milk mixture, letting the excess drip back into the bowl. Place the chicken in the cashew mixture and turn to coat evenly. Transfer each chicken finger to the prepared baking sheet.
6. Bake the chicken fingers in the oven, turning once halfway through, until they are golden all over, about 10 minutes.
7. While the chicken cooks, whisk together the remaining 1/4 cup coconut milk and remaining 2 tablespoons curry paste. Divide the spinach on plates and top with the chicken fingers. Drizzle the chicken fingers and spinach with the sauce and serve.

Be aware of your portion sizes. Here is a guide for you to follow:



• **Your palm**
determines your protein portions.



• **Your fist**
determines your veggie portions.



• **Your cupped hand**
determines your carb portions.



• **Your thumb**
determines your fat portions.

GOAL SETTING

You have created a little miracle! Now is the time to realise just how amazing you are! It is really important that you set goals to help you stay on track and also to help you get through rough patches more easily.

1 **Be Kind To Yourself**

You have been through so much making your little human! Physically, mentally and emotionally. Don't put too much pressure on yourself, just take it day by day. Surround yourself with people that support you and understand you. Try to minimize negativity in your life as much as possible.

2 **Be Flexible**

Us mums need to be flexible to deal with the many things mum-life throws at us! Life happens, milk spills, we all cry! Don't be too hard on yourself when things go wrong. Try to go with the flow whenever possible and make the best out of unplanned hiccups on your journey. This will keep your stress levels down. Less stress = healthier mum and baby.

3 **Believe In Yourself**

Stay positive and remember you can achieve whatever you want if you believe you can do it. If the end goal seems daunting, break it down into manageable pieces that you know you can achieve. Believing that you can do something is a major factor in reaching your weight loss and fitness goals. Believe you can and you will! If you start to doubt yourself then try looking back at how far you have come and what you have achieved already.

4 **Set Specific Measurable Goals**

A goal to "lose weight" is not enough. How will you track your progress? How will you know that your efforts are paying off and that you're heading in the right direction? How will you know when you have reached your goal? Making your goal measurable means adding a number. Not necessarily a number on the scales as this will not determine how healthy you are or how your body is getting leaner and stronger. Try taking measurements or body composition tests. Be aware of how your clothes feel. Keep a record of your progress and review your goals when they become too easy.

5 Be Realistic

Don't set extreme, unrealistic goals. For example, it's not realistic to expect to run a marathon two months after having a baby. Is the goal you are setting yourself attainable? Can it be reached in the time frame you have given yourself? If you set an unattainable goal you will end up feeling disappointed and more likely to give up. Small but challenging goals that you can realistically achieve will keep you motivated and give you the confidence to keep moving in the right direction to reach your overall goal.

6 Make It Relevant

Set goals that are important to where you are in your life right **NOW**. Don't set a goal that someone else is pressuring you to attain, you will not be motivated to complete it. The goals are for **YOU**. Achieving them should make **YOU** feel better and improve **YOUR** life. If you are not concerned about weight loss or if this is not the right time in your life to focus on that, choose something that **DOES** motivate you to become an even better version of yourself.

With so much going on in your life, how do you keep motivated throughout our programme? It's ok! We've been there and we get it! There are days when doing your exercises may be the last thing on your mind. Maybe you're sleep deprived, you need to work, to run errands, the list is endless. Remember, the way you start your morning can affect your whole day.

Get up with a positive attitude and just do your best. Most of us are not 'morning people'! Especially new mums! But if you learn how to start your day off in the best way possible for you then your stress levels and anxiety stay low and you significantly increase your chances of having a satisfying, productive day.

“ Make time for what’s important.
Get it done and move on ”

STRIVE FOR PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

IF YOU FEEL LIKE
QUITTING
REMEMBER WHY
YOU STARTED

Don’t wait until you reach your goal
to be **proud** of yourself.
Be proud of each step you take towards
reaching that goal

It’s not about
having time,
it’s about
making time

MOTIVATION
IS WHAT GETS YOU
STARTED HABIT IS
WHAT KEEPS YOU
GOING

CONCLUSION

Congratulations on completing this six week course! Now is the time to move forward with a healthy and happy lifestyle both for you and your little one.

You can continue to do these exercises regularly to strengthen your core and repair your pelvic floor muscles. Once you have been given the go ahead to do more by your midwife or GP you can add exercises in the gym or increase the workouts you do at home. If you need any additional help or guidance with this please feel free to visit www.lydiarees.com where there are lots of helpful blogs and articles about training and weight loss after giving birth.

Thank you for purchasing **RESTORE YOUR CORE**. Good luck in your journey to becoming the best version of you. We're here to support you along the way so if you have any questions or need any more guidance then just email us at Lydia@lydiarees.com.

Lydia and Amelia