



*Expecting Straighten Up “Backs
and Bellies”*

EXPECTING STRAIGHTEN UP “BACKS AND BELLIES”

Pregnancy is often associated with spine and pelvis discomfort and postural changes. (references 1-13) As the baby grows and the uterus expands, your abdominal muscles are stretched and weakened. Your center of gravity will tend to shift forward, leading to muscle strain of the low back and hips. It can also create spinal stress and worsen posture. This can affect the rest of the body.

The good news is that some simple strengthening and stretching exercises while you are pregnant can help to prevent or relieve this discomfort. (references 13-16).

INTRODUCTION

Expecting Straighten Up stretches are great for expecting moms! The gentle stretches are easy and will take less than 5 minutes to complete. They can relieve spine and pelvic discomfort associated with pregnancy and also facilitate good posture.

To make sure that the exercises are right for you, check with your healthcare provider before beginning them. This is especially important if you have had any complications in your pregnancy.



If any activity hurts, stop doing it right away and consult your healthcare provider. Only do what feels comfortable and pain-free. Adapt the exercises as necessary to fit your comfort level.

“ROCK-A-BYE BABY”

PELVIC TILTS

- For this stretch, wear non-slip shoes and stand with your back against a wall.
- Place your feet 12 inches away from the wall and shoulder width apart.
- Bend your knees slightly.
- Take a breath in.
- Breathe out slowly as you press your low back against the wall using your stomach muscles.
- Hold for a slow 10 count while breathing comfortably. Then relax.
- Repeat 3 times.



“THE PIGEON TOE”

GLUTEAL STRETCH

- Hold a wall or a chair for stability.
- Place your right foot straight in front of you and bend that knee.
- Place the left toe behind the heel of the right foot. Try to turn your left heel outward until it is perpendicular to the right foot.
- Straighten the left leg and remember to keep a bend in the right leg.
- With your hips facing straight ahead, push the left hip to the left side. Keep your head and spine upright.
- Hold the stretch for count of 10 and continue to breathe comfortably.
- Repeat on the other side.



“BABY IN THE BASKET”

PIRIFORMIS STRETCH



- Sit back in a chair with your thighs well supported and your feet on the floor.
- Cross your foot over the other knee.
- Keep your back straight and take a breath in.
- Gaze forward and lean forward at the hip. Breathe out.
- Hold the position for slow count of 10 while breathing comfortably.
- Do this stretch 3 times and repeat on the other side.

“NESTING HEN”

A SQUAT



- Use a stable chair for support.
- Stand upright with your feet about shoulder width apart. Breathe in.
- Bend your knees and lower your body toward the ground as far as is comfortable. Breathe out. **Do not force this stretch, especially late in pregnancy.**



- Maintain the squat position for slow count of 10 and breath comfortably.
- Slowly stand back up and rest for another count of 10.
- Repeat two more times.

The Final Push



- ◉ Evidence indicates that maintaining a healthy active lifestyle is important during pregnancy and after. (See selected references)
- ◉ Abstaining from tobacco and avoiding alcohol is very important for your baby's health and for yours.
- ◉ Take time to rest and relax as necessary, as your body adjusts and adapts to your baby's growth and development.
- ◉ Focus on healthier eating, and don't eat for two!
- ◉ Enjoy keeping your Backs and Bellies healthy and happy, while keeping your baby healthy and happy as well.

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