

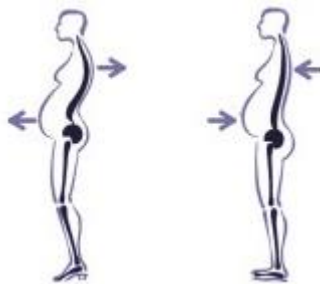
## LOWER BACK PAIN IN PREGNANCY

### Why am I getting back pain?

Back pain is one of the most common complaints of pregnancy. During pregnancy, the extra weight of your growing baby and uterus alters your posture so that the curves of your spine increase in size. In addition, the ligaments that surround the lower back become soft and elastic, which can often cause rubbing of the back and pelvic bones.

### Posture

A poor posture can lead to increased strain on the lower back



### DO

- Wear flat shoes when standing and walking
- When sitting, keep your pelvis higher than your knees by placing a cushion on your chair
- Place a rolled up towel in the small of your back when sitting.
- If you have an office based job, make time for regular short walks and stretches.

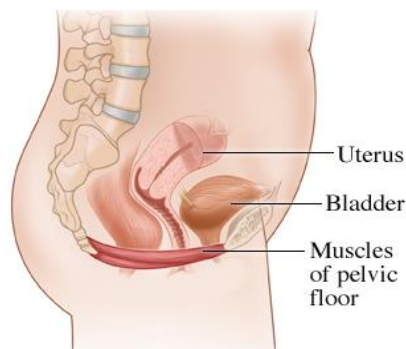
### DONT

- Slouch when watching television
- Walk with an arched back, as this can place increased strain on your lower back muscles.

### Pelvic floor exercises

The pelvic floor muscles surround the front and back passage. They help to control the bladder and bowel, stopping any incontinence.

Performing pelvic floor exercises regularly will help build the muscles that surround and stabilise your pelvis.



### How to strengthen the pelvic floor?

1. Sit or lie comfortable and relax the stomach and buttock.
2. Squeeze and lift the muscles around your front passage, vagina and back passage.
3. Imagine stopping the flow of urine or controlling wind.
4. Try performing some short strong squeezes.
5. Additionally, try holding the muscles for up to 10 seconds.

Aim to perform 5-10 squeezes depending on how strong your pelvic floor is.  
Relax for 5 seconds in-between.  
You will need to perform the whole routine 4-6 times daily.  
To make the exercises harder increased the length of the hold and start to do the exercises in an upright position.

### **How NOT to exercise the pelvic floor**

DO NOT stop your urine flow mid-stream as part of an exercise  
DO NOT hold your breath/ bear down and strain  
DO NOT clench your buttocks

### **Getting in and out of bed**

Many pregnant women complain of difficulty getting in and out of bed. Here is the best method to reduce your pains.

1. Start diagonally in the bed
2. Draw up your pelvic floor as you bend your knees one at a time.
3. Ensure you have enough room to roll over
4. Keeping your knees bent, roll over onto your side
5. With your upper arm in front of you, push your body forwards and up as you lower your legs down over the bed.



When lying in bed, it is best to sleep on your side. Put a pillow between your leg, ensuring it supports your knees and ankles. This will prevent any twisting and stress on your hips whilst you sleep.

Wearing silky clothes to sleep in can often help reduce friction and ease movement when rolling in bed.

### **Exercises**

All exercises to be done in high sitting or standing – NOT lying flat  
If any exercise cause sharp pain, stop the exercise. All exercises should be performed 2-3 times daily.

### **Pelvic Rocking**

In high sitting, slowly flatten the curve of your back by pushing your back down into the bed. Try placing your hand in the small of your back and pushing your back onto your hand. Hold the 5 seconds. Relax, and then repeat 5-10 times.



### **Pelvic tuck in**

Kneel on all fours. Push the middle part of your back up towards the ceiling. Tuck your pelvis under your tailbone and drop your head. Relax, and then push the middle part of your back down creating a C shaped curve across your back.



### **Knee hugging**

In high sitting, bend your knees. Bring one knee towards your chest and hold it behind the knee. Hold for 10 seconds. If you can, try and straighten your knee up towards the ceiling. Do this 5 times. Repeat on the other side.

### **Lifting**

Limit the amount of heavy lifting you are doing, and ask for help if you need it. Pay attention to the way you are lifting, especially if you're lifting another small child.

- Always bend your knees and squat down, keeping your back straight.
- Keep the object that you are lifting close to your body.

If you have a queries contact your physiotherapist who will be happy to advice.

We treat:

- Lower back/groin/hip pain
- Separation of the tummy muscles
- Incontinence

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