

# 5

## facts about exercise during the child-bearing year



### 1

#### Exercise during pregnancy has many benefits to mother and baby

At least 150 minutes of weekly, moderate-intensity exercise:

- controls gestational weight gain
- limits weight gain in pregnant women who are overweight or obese
- reduces the risk of preeclampsia/gestational hypertension
- reduces the risk of gestational diabetes and associated macrosomia
- improves mood and sleep.



### 2

#### Exercise prevents and reduces pelvic girdle and lower back pain during pregnancy

Individualised physio-prescribed exercise includes:

- abdominal strengthening exercises
- pelvic floor muscle training
- targeted stretches
- low impact exercises—walking, stationary cycling & swimming.

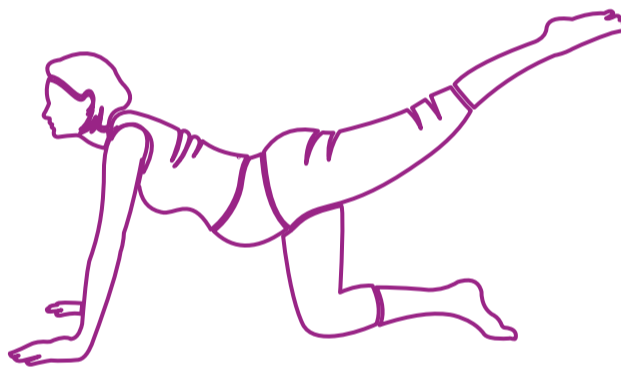


### 3

#### Pelvic floor exercises during and after pregnancy greatly reduce the risk of pelvic floor dysfunction

A supervised pelvic floor muscle training protocol should be followed and include:

- strength-training principles & emphasising maximum contractions
- awareness of functional pelvic floor muscle activation during exercise and daily activities that involve increased pressure on the pelvic floor.



### 4

#### Individualised assessment and rehabilitation is best after delivering a baby

At 6–12 weeks postnatally, every mother should have an individualised pelvic health assessment and guided pelvic floor rehabilitation to:

- prevent and manage pelvic organ prolapse & urinary incontinence
- improve sexual function.



### 5

#### It is recommended to wait at least three months after childbirth before considering a return to running

A low-impact exercise regimen should be followed, incorporating:

- basic cardio—walking, cycling & swimming
- low-load pelvic floor and abdominal exercises
- a graduated return to more load from 3–6 months.



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