



Resilient RECOVERY

CONNECT, SUPPORT, & HEAL

A FITNESS PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR WEEKS 0-10 POSTPARTUM



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CHAPTER TWO - YOUR POSTPARTUM STOMACH

LOVING YOURSELF

For some, this can be the hardest part of postpartum. Looking down at a space that your baby was merely nestled in. A space where society labels as beautiful, cute, or glowing during pregnancy and shameful, unfit, or lost it during postpartum. Let this chapter remind you that you did good work Mama.



LIFESTYLE

So when it comes to your exhale, I want you to remember this - “Up and out of you, not down and into you”. This is referring to **how** you exhale. Try it with me. Take an inhale and exhale that breath down. What did you feel? Maybe you felt pressure or heaviness in your pelvic floor. Maybe you felt your stomach bulge outward. Maybe you just felt heavier. Now take another inhale and exhale that breath up - make yourself feel lighter. Now what did you feel? Did you feel your pelvic floor lift? Maybe your abs pulled up and in? That feeling in both is pressure and where it is going in your body. You will learn tons more about pressure later, but for right now, know that pressure needs to move up and out of you on exhale. By moving up and out, you’re protecting your core vs. down and in which is inhibiting your healing.

When Do You Exhale?

Anytime you move against gravity. So...

- rising up from a chair
- lifting your child up from the floor
- picking up the baby carrier,
- lifting something up over your head
- pushing something away from you

are all times in which you will be exhaling.

Now there will be times where exhaling as you move with gravity may be needed. And that’s because your body will need the additional support. I especially like this cuing for Mamas who are experiencing symptoms such as incontinence or prolapse or who just feel like their innards could fall out of them.

Instances for that would include...

- setting something heavy back down to the floor
- bringing something down that was overhead

Lastly, you want to begin your exhale BEFORE you begin moving and continue to carry that exhale out throughout the entire movement. By exhaling before you move, you’re creating stabilization in your spine and beginning to move pressure up and away from your pelvic floor. Now exhaling at the same time is better than not exhaling at all, but by “blowing before you go” you’re optimizing your breath to support your body. And you want to carry your exhale through the entire movement to continue to manage pressure by pulling it up and away. When you hold your breath, the tendency is to bear down and that inhibits your healing.



As you go to pick up your child or any object, you begin your exhale just before you begin picking them up off the floor. Continue your exhale until you’ve reached the top and the child is on your arm.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING



Inhale - Umbrella Opens - Diaphragm, TVA, & PF expand down & out



Exhale - Umbrella closes - PF, TVA, and Diaphragm pull up & in

remain in this state for long because this is your body sitting in survival mode and systems not needed for survival such as digestion and hormone health begin shutting down. So you can see how in the early months of postpartum how your body can naturally and easily shift into this state tending for a newborn and healing itself.

So by getting connected to your breath and doing some mindful breathing whether it be in your programming or whenever you need it throughout your day - even 1 good breath makes a massive difference - you're stimulating the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve runs from the brain stem through the spinal cord to the abdomen. Diaphragmatic breathing stimulates the vagus nerve with soft vibrations, signaling the brain to slow heart rate, slow breathing, relax the body, and tap back into your "rest-and-digest" state. To best stimulate the vagus nerve, breathe out longer than you breathe in (we'll chat more about this in your learning videos).

How to Diaphragmatically Breathe

Now you may term diaphragmatic breathing as belly breathing, but I actually don't like that terminology because then what happens is all the air (pressure) is being push out on the belly and you don't want that. Instead, I like to term it "360° Breathing" which means 360° of expansion within your entire core canister which encompasses your ribcage, abdomen, and pelvic floor.

To imagine this on yourself, I like to have clients imagine an umbrella inside of them. On inhale, the umbrella opens - your ribcage and belly expand in all directions and your pelvic floor gently bulges and on exhale the umbrella closes - your pelvic floor pulls upward and your core and ribs collapse in and back towards the spine.

The other reason that I don't prefer the term belly breathing is because expansion of the ribcage is sooo important during postpartum. And that's because during pregnancy, your ribcage shape changes as baby presses up on the diaphragm. And while many things "go back" after pregnancy, the ribcage shape is not one of them. With intentional breathwork, targeted core work, and progressive overload, you can reshape them. So you'll find in your program breathing in lots of funny positions that help to drive breath up into your ribcage. Besides supporting the diaphragm function, reshaping also helps with pressure management and improving the relationship of your scapula on your ribcage.

In your program, we will dive deeper into how to feel this on your body and what it looks like. I walk you through a guided breathing tutorial as well.

RECOVERY TIMELINES

Tissue	Fully Recover
Uterus	6-8 Weeks
Pelvic Organs	6-8 Weeks
Pelvic Floor	6-12 Months (min)
Core	9-18 Months (min)

Uterus -

Fully recovered means that the uterus has returned back to it's normal position and approximate size (more on this in a second).

Pelvic Organs -

Fully recovered means that the pelvic organs have returned back to their original positions.

Pelvic Floor -

Fully recovered means return of its tensile strength. And it's important to note that just because you had a cesarean delivery doesn't mean that your pelvic floor hasn't been impacted. It may not have experienced tearing, but it did lengthen and bulge to accommodate and support the pregnancy

Core -

Also referring to tensile strength as being fully recovered.

Nothing Fully Returns to Pre-Pregnancy State

Here's the thing, you CAN rebuild, connect, and come back stronger and become your most fit self as a mom (I sure did and I know sooooo many other Mamas who can say that same), but one thing that will never return is your pre-pregnancy tensile strength.

And that's because once you stretch those tissues, they will collapse, but they will never fully return to their pre-pregnancy tension. An easy analogy to grasp this is to imagine a new balloon (pre-pregnancy), blow it up (pregnancy), now deflate it (postpartum). That once new balloon is now a little softer, a little more saggy, a little easier to blow up if you do it again....same thing happens in your body. You can't return to pre-stretched state once it's been stretched. But please Mama, don't let that bug you. I PROMISE you, that being stretched doesn't have to define you, your strength, or your abilities....the sky is still as endless as it was pre-pregnancy. I argue the sky is more limitless in postpartum because now you're a mother.