



# CESAREAN SCAR MASSAGE

ALWAYS CONSULT WITH YOUR MEDICAL PROVIDER  
PRIOR TO STARTING ANY FORM OF TREATMENT



WomenInMotion\_Wellness  
[www.WomenInMotionPT.com](http://www.WomenInMotionPT.com)

# TIPS FOR CESAREAN RECOVERY

## Immediate Post Cesarean:

A Cesarean is a major abdominal surgery, you want to make sure to avoid increase tension or load to the abdominal area during the immediate recovery phase.

- Avoid lifting or carrying heavy things
- When getting out of bed roll on to your side and use your arms to assist yourself into a seated position
- Use a pillow to splint your belly if you if you have to sneeze or cough
- When you are going to have your first bowel movement use a trash can or squatty potty to prop your feet up. Biomechanically this position will ease the passage. Try not to hold your breath and bear down, instead exhale as your are pushing your bowel movement.

## Early Recovery: approx week 1 -4

- You can begin diaphragmatic breathing to indirectly move the tissue
  - One hand on your chest and one hand on your belly
  - Inhale through your nose and watch both hands evenly rise
  - Exhale “blow out your birthday candles” gently bringing your belly button towards your spine
- Pelvic Floor Contractions
  - The pelvic Floor Muscles can get stretched and weak from increase weight of the uterus during pregnancy (regardless of your delivery method)
  - For normal function the pelvic floor muscles should be able to contract & lift and fully relax (eccentrically lengthen)
  - Breath + Core + Pelvic Floor
    - Inhale through your nose and watch both hands evenly rise
    - Exhale “blow out your birthday candles” gently bringing your belly button to your spine As you try to contract and lift your pelvic floor muscles

If you are unsure if you are doing this correctly grab a mirror and look. You should see movement of your perineum as you contract and relax your pelvic floor muscles. Self screens are available in my 4th trimester guide.

## Week 6:

Around 6 weeks postpartum you will typically have a postpartum follow up appointment with your OB or birth provider.

- ACOG (American College of Obstetrician and Gynecology) recommends that postpartum women have some form of “check in” prior to this 6-week follow up. Frequency of visits and access to your provider may vary based on geographical location. Thus if you have questions or concerns or things don't seem right don't hesitate to reach out to your medical provider. Typically around 6 weeks most women get cleared to return to “regular” activities. This clearance should come from your OB or birth provider.

- If you are cleared to exercise I highly recommend seeing a Physical Therapist to guide you on this journey! The specifics on your journey and rate of progression and return to exercise is very individualized.



# HOW MUCH CAN I WALK ?

## Recommended Walking Program

- Walking is so good for the soul and you may be tempted to go on long walks with your baby but remember your body is healing.
- Evidence suggest it takes over 6 weeks for the uterine scar to completely heal and even at 6 months postpartum many women have only regained above 60-75% of their core strength back!
- Slow and steady wins the race

The below are **general recommendations** and not specific to your case. For the purpose of these guidelines, we consider walking as an activity for exercise not simply waking around your house. Please make sure to consider your daily total activity such as: going to the grocery store, cleaning, or doing laundry as your total activity may be exceeding these recommendations.

Week 1: 5 minutes of walking  
Week 2: 10 minutes of walking  
Week 3: 15 minutes of walking  
Week 4: 20 minutes of walking  
Week 5: 25 minutes of walking  
Week 6: 30 minutes of walking

## Signs that you may be over doing it:

- Increase bleeding
- Belly cramping
- Pelvic Heaviness or Pressure
- Low Bac/SIJ or pubic bone pain



# WHEN TO SEE A PELVIC HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPIST

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms please ask your medical provider if pelvic health physical therapy is right for you!

- Pelvic pain
- Painful intercourse
- pain with penetration
- Urinary leakage
- Fecal Incontinence (increase frequency, urgency, loss of bowel control, fecal seepage)
- Anal Incontinence (unable to control farts )
- Numbness/tingling in the vulva area
- Pelvic pressure, heaviness, feeling like something is falling out
- Urinary frequency, urgency
- Urinary retention, feeling like you can't fully emptying
- Scar pain
- Low back, hip, pubic symphysis, coccyx, pelvic pain.
- Orthopedic or Nerve Injuries sustained during labor and delivery
- Abdominal Separation (Diastasis Recti)
- Guidance on return to Recreational Activities

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms come see me:

Women In Motion Physical Therapy and Wellness

1747 Allied Street, Suite D

434-202-2295

If you are outside of the state of Virginia check out my virtual wellness consult offerings on my website.

APTA.org has a "find a PT" tab where you can search for a PT with Obstetrics/Orthopedic/Pelvic Health specializations in your area.



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Scar Massage can begin once your scar is fully healed and your OB has given you clearance. Typically, this starts at around 6 weeks, however 20 year old scars can benefit from scar massage. Initially your scar may be sensitive or painful. If this is the case start working on the tissue above and below the scar. The scar line you see is just the tip of the iceberg so there is great benefit to working on the areas around the scar line. Once your scar becomes less sensitive you can put your finger tips right on the scar. If this makes you apprehensive you can also use cloth of various textures to try progressing to using your fingers.



Place your fingers on your skin and try moving in different directions to see how mobile the tissue is. You want to work into areas of resistance. Anchor one point (above or below the scar), and mobilize the other point into the area of resistance

- right, left, straight up, clock wise, counter clockwise

If this is pain free you can melt deeper into the skin to work the deeper layers You may find that one area of the scar is less mobile or more sensitive than the rest (adjust pressure accordingly).



Skin rolling is a progressed technique to work through different layers. You can do this technique in multiple directions. To get the deeper layers you can try bending your knees or supporting your lower legs on a chair to slacken the skin (allowing you to get a better grasp). These techniques are general guidelines and progressions not specific medical advice. If you are having pain around your scar, pain with lifting, carrying or urinary urgency, frequency or retention please see a Women's Health Physical Therapist





Hey Mama,

Women in Motion Wellness was created to be a place to educate and empower women on their unique journeys! We offer virtual and in person physical therapy and wellness services. If you have mom friends please share our account with them, each mom is on a unique journey and so often silently dealing with their own struggles. Our classes were designed with the goal to change the narrative from weight loss and bounce back programs to educating women on understanding their bodies and evidence based time lines for return to exercise.

Thank you for letting us be a part of your journey.

I can't wait to meet you.

XO Michelle



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