

EMPOWER ME FITNESS



**TERM 2
2019**

Empower Me

FITNESS AND
CONSULTING



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Goal Setting

As a busy Mum I know it can be hard to find time for ourselves. We may feel like we want to exercise more or eat better etc but it can be so overwhelming knowing where and how to start.

*****My #1 tip is to start small***** Doing something small consistently will yield better results than doing everything one week then falling off the wagon for the next few, before having the energy to try again.

Follow these steps to set small, actionable goals that will lead to greater success.

1 What would you like to achieve from coming to class this term?
(e.g improve fitness, lose weight, carry baby pain free)

2 List 3 actions that will help you towards your goal. Be specific and realistic. Be 90-100% confident you can implement one of these each week (e.g. 10 squats per day, 10min walk 3x/wk, 1x weekend workout/wk)

3 Track your progress. (e.g. I just use something simple like the table below)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
10 min walk 3x/wk							
10 squats per day							
1 workout/wk							

4 Be flexible

The demands of motherhood are constantly changing depending on the age, stage and phase your baby/toddler is going through. Be kind to yourself and if you are not successful in achieving your weekly goal, re-evaluate and revise until you are 90-100% confident you can achieve your action for the following week.

Workout Diary

By signing up for class, you will also receive a workout emailed to you each week to do at home. Use this diary as a way to track your progress throughout term. Place it on your fridge, bathroom mirror, or anywhere you will view it regularly.

Week/Date	Class	Weekend Workout	Other exercise
Week 1 (29 th Apr)			
Week 2 (6 th May)			
Week 3 (13 th May)			
Week 4 (20 th May)			
Week 5 (27 th May)			
Week 6 (3 rd Jun)			
Week 7 (10 th Jun)			
Week 8 (17 th Jun)			
Week 9 (24 th Jun)			
Week 10 (1 st Jul)			

Term Challenge: BINGO



This challenge aims to get you thinking about different ways to add exercise into your busy life.

The winner will be the first person to cross off all the boxes below or the person who has crossed off the most by the last week of term.

Workout in your Pj's	Attend class 3 weeks in a row	Eat 2 pieces of fruit/day, 3 days in a row	Do some squats whilst in kitchen (e.g. waiting for jug to boil)
Complete an obstacle course with your toddler	Indulge in a block of chocolate	walk to playgroup instead of driving	Do dips on your dining chair
go a whole week without doing a workout	drink 8 glasses of water a day for 3 days in a row	check yourself out (posture) as you walk past a shop window	Use cans as weights during workout
zomin walk with pram	Ad break workout (side steps/jog on spot during ads)	do push ups on the kitchen bench whilst cooking dinner	workout while everyone else in the house is sleeping
Performed pelvic floor exercises whilst cleaning teeth, 3 days in a row	use baby/toddler as a weight (e.g. doing squats)	Complete 5 "weekend workouts"	washing deadlifts (perform proper deadlifts whilst getting washing from basket to hang)
complete a workout at the park	complete a workout with a friend	Walk to the shops instead of driving	Mum & baby tummy time - complete core workout during baby tummy time

Core & Pelvic Health

Following my own pregnancy and postnatal experiences I wanted to put together some information focused on YOU (mums). Although there is a lot of focus on your baby, it is still really important to look after yourself and do the right things to help with your recovery post pregnancy. With approximately 1/3 women experiencing pelvic health issues (incontinence, prolapse, pain etc) during pregnancy and the postpartum period my aim is to provide you with information on certain aspects that affect women during this period to help you understand the changes that you experience and how to adapt to these changes.

Although pelvic health issues are 'common', they are not 'normal'. The more educated women are about their bodies, the better they will be able to make good decisions leading to a positive health outcome. The current cultural dialogue regarding pregnancy and exercise (i.e. bounce back to pre-pregnancy self as quick as possible) is damaging for a lot of women. Let's shift the focus being the best you can be in your current body.

What is your core?

When I talk about core, I am referring to your deep abdominal muscles that support your body through movement. These are your diaphragm at the top, your pelvic floor muscles at the bottom, your transverse abdominis at the front and your multifidus at the back. These 4 muscles work together to support you through movement and the strength and connection between these muscles can be altered during pregnancy and childbirth.



Why is posture important?



Your posture affects how you breathe and the way your core muscles interact with each other. When your body is in the correct alignment, your muscles (especially your core) are positioned for optimal function/support.

Changes during pregnancy/postpartum: During pregnancy your body adapts gradually to its changing figure and centre of gravity, however, studies have shown that it does not automatically bounce back to pre-pregnancy status. After birth, you also have added influences of carrying baby and breastfeeding which can affect posture & therefore core function.



Right: Good posture: Untucked bum, slight curve of the lower back, head in line with shoulders & hips
Left: Bad posture: tucked bum (i.e. flat bottom), rounded shoulders, head in front of shoulders

Core & Pelvic Health

Breathing

Ideally you should breathe evenly through your chest AND belly (allowing your ribs to expand, opening out like an umbrella), known as diaphragmatic breathing. Incorrect posture can lead to you either breathing more into your chest or more into your belly. If you are not breathing neutrally, then your core stabilising muscles (remember your diaphragm is part of your deep core structure) are also not able to function optimally. For example, a lot of women who breastfeed have rounded shoulders, causing them to breathe predominately into the belly and therefore increasing the pressure on the pelvic floor.

When exercising, it is important not to hold your breath but either breathe on the hardest part of the exercise (exertion) or throughout the whole movement. During a squat for example, breathe in going down, and out coming up, OR breathe out for the whole duration of the squat.



Correct breathing: Imagine your ribs as a giant church bell. A bell rings when the clapper hits the side. We want a quiet bell in terms of breathing. Your ribs should not be tilted up too far (boobs up & out) or tilted down too low (rounded shoulders) otherwise your imaginary clapper inside the bell will make it ring. A quiet bell (not rung up or down) means your ribs centred over your hips and are not tilting either way.



The exercises we do in class are all functional and aim to help strengthen the large muscles that affect your posture. You will also hear me often prompting you to breathe during exercises.



Core & Pelvic Health

Pelvic Floor

These are the muscles in your pelvis that support your internal organs from below. To understand where these muscles are, these are the ones that for example you use to stop the flow of urine or passing wind.

Pelvic floor exercises are commonly known as kegels – it is important to both contract AND relax the pelvic floor muscles as they naturally are constantly contracting AND relaxing when you breathe.

Changes in pregnancy/postpartum: The added weight of baby during pregnancy as well as the process of birthing can weaken or cause injury to the pelvic floor muscles. Weakening of the pelvic floor muscles or the surrounding tissue can lead to problems such as incontinence or pelvic organ prolapse (the descent of the internal organs into the vaginal cavity). I know some women are not comfortable talking about this area and any issues they may be experiencing but please know I am happy to discuss this and can help you seek further help if needed. If any exercise causes or exacerbates symptoms, please let me know so we can modify accordingly.

Diastasis Recti



Diastasis Recti is the separation of the large abdominal muscle to allow for baby to grow. It is normal and all women will have some degree of separation during pregnancy.

It is important to understand how this can affect your body postpartum and how you can close the gap and achieve good core function. It will not always resolve on its own so it is helpful to train this area of your body correctly postnatally to avoid any pelvic health problems. 66% of women with diastasis also experience pelvic floor problems such as prolapse and incontinence.



Correct posture and breathing as well as specific SAFE core exercises performed regularly can help to close the gap and improve core strength/stability.

Safe Core Exercises

Perform these exercises 4-5 times per week to rebuild your core function after pregnancy/childbirth. Or do just 1 exercise each day (alternating between all 4). This will build up a good base strength and we will then progress these in class through the term.

If you feel these are becoming easy and you would like to progress quicker than in class, just ask & I can suggest progressions for you.



1. Glute Bridge (10 reps x3)

Lying on your back, knees bent, squeeze your butt to raise your hips off the floor. Breathe out going up/in going down.



2. Heel Slides (10 reps each side x3)

Lying in same start position as above, slide one leg along the ground out straight, then back up to start position. Breathe out as you slide out, in as you slide back. Ensure your belly is not pushing up and you are not arching your back when you do this.



3. Alternate Supermans (10 reps each side x3)

On hands and knees, elbows soft (not locked), raise alternate arm and leg of ground, if stable, straighten both before coming back to start position. Only go as far as you can whilst your trunk is stable. Breathe out as you reach out, in as you bring back to start position.



4. Side planks (10 reps each side x3)

Lay on your side with lower leg bent, top leg straight, Elbow under your shoulder. Lift hip off ground and lower again. Breath out as you lift up, in on lowering.



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