

Post-Partum 7-Minute Workout

Introduction

The 7-Minute Workout gained popularity due to its efficiency in improving cardiovascular fitness and muscular endurance in a short time. Research supports its effectiveness, particularly in high-intensity circuit training (HICT), which combines strength and aerobic exercises in a structured format to optimize results. Studies show that HICT improves VO2 max, insulin sensitivity, and fat loss while being time-efficient. For post-partum women, however, modifications are necessary to account for physiological changes after pregnancy, such as pelvic floor weakness, diastasis recti, and reduced core stability. The exercise program should progress gradually to restore strength and function while minimizing risks like pelvic organ prolapse, excessive intra-abdominal pressure, or back pain. The following post-partum exercise program is divided into three phases to allow a safe and progressive return to activity.

Aim: At Least 3 Sessions Per Week

To see meaningful progress, aim to complete the exercises at least three times per week. This consistency is essential for muscle activation, strength rebuilding, and neuromuscular retraining, especially for the core and pelvic floor. Less than three sessions per week may not provide enough stimulus for improvement, slowing recovery. If you complete fewer than three sessions, it's best to repeat the week to ensure a strong foundation before progressing.

Phase ZERO: Immediate post-partum

These exercises are safe to perform immediately following the birth. We recommend reviewing them with your pelvic floor physiotherapist towards the end of your prepartum rehabilitation.

Focus: Core activation, pelvic floor strengthening, swelling management, circulatory exercises, breathing.

Why? These exercises support healing, reduce swelling, and gently reactivate core and pelvic floor muscles, laying the foundation for recovery

Phase ZERO: 7-Minutes Circuit (Repeat 2x if tolerated)

1. Diaphragmatic Breathing + Pelvic Floor Activation (30 sec)



2. Pelvic floor “winking” (fast contraction and release to improve perineal blood circulation and swelling)
3x15 reps

1-2 min rest between series

3. Ankle pumps: 3x 20 reps, pillow under ankle and pelvis



Phase ZERO: 7-Minutes Circuit (Repeat 2x if tolerated)

1. Active lumbar rotation and diaphragmatic breathing (30 sec)



2. Walking (up to 60 mins, low to moderate intensity, able to maintain conversation)

3. Sit-to stand: 3x8 reps



Phase One: Floor-Based Recovery (6 to 12 weeks postpartum)

Focus: Core activation, pelvic floor strengthening, gentle mobility.

Why? To prevent prolapse, diastasis recti, and instability by ensuring safe movement and proper muscle engagement before progressing to standing exercises.

****This phase can be started 6-8 weeks postpartum after receiving clearance for exercise from your pelvic floor physiotherapist****

Phase One 7-Minute Circuit (Repeat 2x if tolerated)

1. Diaphragmatic Breathing + Pelvic Floor Activation (30 sec)



2. Heel Slides + Transverse Activation (15 reps)



3. Glute Bridge with Ball Squeeze and Pelvic Floor Engagement (30 sec)



1-2 min rest between series

4. Side-Lying Clamshells (8 reps per side)



5. Mini Crunch (30 sec) ****Engage core and pelvic floor****



6. Bird dog (8 reps per side)



Phase Two: Progression & Functional Core Strength (12-18 weeks postpartum)

Focus: Building core endurance, improving mobility, integrating standing movements.
Why? The body is healing, and it's time to add gentle resistance and endurance-based work.

Phase Two 7-Minute Circuit (Repeat 2-3x if tolerated)

1. Pelvic Tilts + Core Activation (30 sec)



2. Dead Bug Progression (6 reps per side)



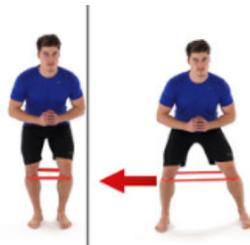
3. Plank on Knees (30 sec)



4. Seated Resistance Band Rows (10 reps)



5. Lateral squat with elastic (20 sec each direction)



6. Mini Squats with Core Engagement (10 reps)



Phase Three: Standing & Functional Movement Phase (18 to 24 weeks postpartum)

Focus: Full-body strength, endurance, return to fitness.
Why? Prepares for higher-intensity activities like running, lifting, or sport.

Phase Three 7-Minute Circuit (Repeat 3-4x as tolerated)

1. Squats with Overhead Reach (12 reps)



add 8-12 lb dumbbell to increase difficulty

2. Lateral lunge (10 reps per side)



add 8-12 lb dumbbell to increase difficulty

3. Squat to Calf Raise (12 reps)



add 8-12 lb dumbbell to increase difficulty

4. Incline Push-Ups
(10 reps)



floor push-ups on knees to increase difficulty

5. Glute Kickbacks with Band
(10 reps per side)



add ankle weights or 20 sec pulse at top to increase difficulty

6. Plank (30 sec)



add alternating leg lifts to increase difficulty

Return to impact (running, tennis, moderate to vigorous physical activity)

What does the research say?? Before starting a postnatal return to running, consult your pelvic floor rehabilitation physiotherapist to conduct a postnatal running capacity screening and to introduce a individualized post partum running program. The assessment includes factors regarding your pelvic health, impact tolerance, and other physiological factors.

Before returning to impact, you should :

- Not experience urinary leakage during exertion (coughing, jumping, laughing) or fecal loss
- Not feel any sensation of heaviness or pressure in the vagina (tampon sensation)
- Not experience abdominal or C-section-related pain that is aggravated by exercise
- Not experience vaginal bleeding
- Be able to tolerate 30 minutes of walking before beginning a walk-run program. For running with a stroller, follow the instructions specific to your stroller guide (on average, this can be started 6 months postpartum).

Return to Running

1. Single leg calf raise (10 reps per side)



2. Single leg bridge (10 reps per side)



3. Side lying hip abduction (10 reps per side)



4. Running on the spot (1 min)



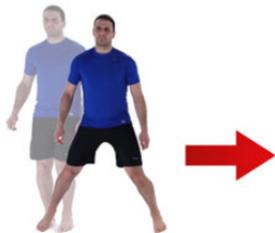
5. Single leg squat (6 reps per side)



6. (if exercise 5 well-tolerated) Single leg sit-to-stand (6 reps per side) (Single leg running man)



7. Lateral shuffle (30 sec each direction)



Closing Statement

Thank you for using this 7-minute full-body postpartum program. It was developed by a kinesiologist and physiotherapists at Action Sport Physio TMR to offer safe, accessible movements that support your recovery, restore strength, and help you reconnect with your body after pregnancy.

Every postpartum journey is different, and there's no "right" timeline—go at your own pace and repeat these exercises as often as feels comfortable. Consistency, patience, and self-compassion are key.

We hope this program helps you feel supported, empowered, and confident as you move forward in your recovery.

Questions?

Call us or come see us!

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