



PRE AND POSTNATAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

Pregnancy is amazing and a life changing experience, but it can play havoc with your body as it transforms during pregnancy as your body undergoes dramatic change in a fairly short period of time.

As the baby grows your hormones, posture and balance change. As the baby gets heavier, the pressure inside your abdomen and down onto your pelvic floor muscles increases, meaning your pelvic floor muscles need to stay strong to support the weight of the baby and to prevent urine leakage. Muscles, joints and ligaments undergo many changes which affect the whole body, and it is common to experience a variety of musculoskeletal symptoms.

Prenatal Physiotherapy

Some common conditions you may experience during pregnancy include:

- Pelvic girdle/ Hip/ Groin/ Pubic pain
- Lower back/ Sacroiliac joint (SIJ) pain/ Sciatica
- Thoracic/ Rib pain
- Pelvic floor weakness and Urinary incontinence
- Carpal tunnel syndrome

As every pregnancy is different you need an experienced physiotherapist who will design a specific program to suit your needs. This may include assessment and strengthening of the



pelvic floor and core muscles, joint mobilisations, massage, an exercise program to maintain flexibility and strength, education and advice.

Postnatal Physiotherapy

Post pregnancy and delivery (vaginal or caesarean), there will understandably be a weakening of your pelvic floor muscles, these are vital for continence, pelvic stability and sexual function. To prevent long term problems start pelvic floor exercises as soon as possible. Postnatally you will find yourself holding your baby in sustained positions and doing lots of lifting, which can lead to many aches and pains. Common problems experienced postnatally include:

- Stress and urge incontinence
- Pelvic and Lower back pain
- Upper back and Neck pain
- Diastasis Recti (Abdominal separation)

Ideally a Postnatal MOT should be performed, by a physiotherapist experienced in womens health, from 6 weeks postnatally (after you have had your GP check-up). This should include assessments of pelvic floor, pelvis, SIJ and lumbar spine, abdominal separation, scar and return to sport/exercise and then a personalised treatment plan is formulated together with advice on nutrition, sleep, posture and ergonomics

But even if your pregnancy was years ago, it's never too late!!! ■



About the Author

Farhana is passionate about restoring pain-free movement and function in patients. An expert in male and female health as well as MSK physiotherapy

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