

Postpartum Weightloss Journey

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Your body is
already
normal.



Your body is already normal. Your body looks exactly how it's supposed to right now. You just gave birth! Embrace its current state and focus on nourishing and caring for yourself as you navigate this transformative time.

Listen to Your Body. Your recovery journey is unique to you, and your body will communicate what it needs. Whether you feel up to taking leisurely strolls right after your 6 week postpartum checkup or simply adding a few extra trips up the stairs each day, honor your pace.

Remember to ease into activities gradually, avoiding the urge to push yourself too hard, too fast. Consider following a guideline such as the 10% rule for distance-based activities, gradually increasing the duration or distance of your exercises by 10% each week.

Screening Criteria for Postpartum Exercise. It is important to give your body the time it needs to heal after childbirth before adding exercises back into your daily or weekly routine. This checklist is designed to help you assess and monitor your postpartum recovery and determine whether your body is ready to start moving again.

- ✓ Walking 1 mile feels comfortable and doesn't bring back bright red lochia.
- ✓ I've noticed that my lochia has either stopped completely or is close to stopping.
- ✓ My episiotomy/laceration has healed up nicely, and I'm feeling minimal to no discomfort.
- ✓ I'm glad to report that my cesarean incision has healed well, and I'm not feeling much discomfort anymore.
- ✓ I'm doing my post C-section kegels and foot exercises until my belly feels better.
- ✓ I'm keeping an eye on my pelvic health. Ideally, I'm not experiencing any stress incontinence, but I'm making exceptions for pelvic floor exercises and gentle restorative poses.
- ✓ My milk production seems to be going well, and I'm feeling confident about breastfeeding or feeding my little one.

Exercise Wisely. Begin with gentle, low-impact exercises like yoga, tai chi, or walking. Aim for five to six days of activity per week and keep your heart rate at around 60% of your maximum heart rate. You can estimate this by subtracting your age from 220 and then multiplying by 0.60. Track your heart rate during exercise using a smartwatch or by counting pulses in your wrist for one minute.

A balanced routine of cardiovascular activity, strength exercises, and stretching will promote overall conditioning. Two of the places that you'll have lost the most strength during pregnancy are your core and your pelvic floor (see handout). Because of this, they're especially important to focus on, but you'll also need to be careful. Start slowly and build up.

I recommend doing exercise "snacks." That is 2-8 minutes a few times throughout the day. Aim for 10 to 15 minutes total daily, gradually increasing duration every week or two. Great times for this include: waiting for your tea water to boil, while baby is doing tummy time, waiting for the microwave to finish, etc.

Be cautious with high-intensity training, especially if you're not experienced or haven't kept up with it during pregnancy. Stop immediately if you experience pain or excessive fatigue.

Prioritize Rest. Remember that rest is as important as everything else

Nutrition Matters. While breastfeeding, your body burns additional calories, but it's crucial to replenish them to support recovery, milk production, and overall well-being. Aim for a balanced diet rich in:

- Healthy proteins like fish, chicken, nuts, and beans.
- High-fiber foods such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables to aid digestion.
- Nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables to support recovery and provide essential vitamins and minerals.

Limit or avoid sugary and refined foods, as well as highly processed snacks. Remember: there is no such thing as “bad food.” Strict avoidance and creating rules around food is more likely to create unhealthy relationships with food. Instead, think of your diet and nutrition in a macro perspective - eg, When you need a sweet treat, let yourself enjoy it knowing that 80-90% of your nutrition comes from whole, unprocessed foods and are plant based.

Tips for Sticking to Nutritional Goals:

- Avoid skipping meals to prevent cravings and unhealthy choices later.
- Establish a mealtime routine and portion control to manage calorie intake.
- Consider meal kit subscriptions or pre-prepared options for convenience.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help from friends and family with meal preparation or grocery shopping.

Nutrition Tips While Breastfeeding:

- Increase fluid intake by consuming an extra five to eight cups of non-caffeinated liquids daily.
- Enjoy an occasional alcoholic beverage, but wait at least two hours after drinking before breastfeeding to minimize alcohol transfer to breast milk.
- Adjust calorie intake as breastfeeding frequency changes, reducing snacks or meal sizes accordingly.

want to learn more?



Schedule an appointment with Dr. Turner at Montana Whole Health to get individualized recommendations about your postpartum journey.

Dr. Turner is a Naturopathic Physician specializing in pediatric and women's health. She has specialty training as in midwifery and pelvic floor therapy.