

After the first six weeks postpartum, you may feel ready to resume exercise and other activities that require physical movement and/or exertion. Jumping into too much activity too quickly can cause more harm than good, which is why toning exercises that can be done while holding and cuddling your baby are a great way to ease into your exercise routine.



Use a mat, blanket or cushion to lay on the floor for comfort and keep in mind your baby’s developmental stage - what can s/he do with you safely. Also make sure you have a safe, comfortable spot to lay your baby down, if necessary.

It is also a good idea to make sure you and your baby are not hungry, tired or irritated prior to beginning the toning exercises. Calm and relaxation are helpful in toning and stretching out muscles, tendons and ligaments of the body.

The following toning movements are adapted from Robin Lim’s book, *After the Baby’s Birth* (pp 143- 148). You can use these and/or other toning movements that can help you restore and heal safely:

Hug Rolls

- lay on your back with knees raised and baby in arms
- gently, slowly roll with your baby from one side to the other
- breathe deep and relax to let go of tension in your vertebrae

Cat/Cow

- on hands and knees, long breath out as you arch spine toward the sky & hold
- inhale deeply as you allow your back to slowly descend and sag in the middle & release

Upside Down Baby

- sit comfy on the floor with legs straight out
- lay baby on tummy on top of your legs
- gently hold your baby’s ankles and slowly lift them up (think handstand)
- gently lower your baby

Pony Ride

- Lie on your back, bring your knees almost to your chest
- lay baby on your shins and balance comfortably
- gently raise and lower your feet about 6 inches
- careful not to strain your knees

Seat Walk

- Sit with legs straight out
- Rock back & forth on your behind while reaching and “walking” your feet forward, alternating sides/arms
- Lengthening and stretching during this exercise can be very beneficial

Stretching helps with range of motion and circulation, the more “stretched out” you are, the more flexibility you will have - and the more FUN you will have inventing new moves with your baby!!

References

Lim, R. (2001). *After the Baby's Birth. A Complete Guide for Postpartum Women.* (Revised). Berkley, CA: Celestial Arts