

# YOUR EARLY POSTPARTUM MOVEMENT GUIDE

By Rosie at Mamawell



These early weeks matter. Not because of what you need to achieve, but because getting the foundations right makes everything that comes after easier. This guide expands on the checklist, adds some simple starting-point exercises, and gives you a clear picture of when to wait and who to see.

## PART 1: BEFORE YOU BEGIN

### Check these off first:

✓ **Bleeding has settled and you're no longer passing heavy or fresh lochia**

Lochia typically lasts 2-6 weeks. If bleeding increases when you start moving more, that's feedback to slow down and rest.

✓ **No pain, pressure, or heaviness in your pelvis or perineum during daily movement**

Feelings of heaviness or dragging can be signs of pelvic organ prolapse and should be checked by a women's health physio before starting exercise. Mild perineal tenderness from stitches is normal - sharp pain isn't.

✓ **Any leaking when you walk, cough, or sneeze? Focus on pelvic floor reconnection first**

Leaking is common but not something you have to accept. It's a sign that pelvic floor work needs to come before adding any impact to your movement.

✓ **Any stitches or your caesarean scar feel comfortable day to day**

The external scar heals faster than the internal layers. Even when things look healed, deeper tissue is still recovering. If your scar pulls or feels uncomfortable, give it more time.

✓ **You've started gently reconnecting with your pelvic floor - even just noticing it is a start**

You don't need to be doing full exercises yet. Can you feel it? Can you gently lift and release? That initial awareness is where everything builds from.

✓ **You feel ready - not pressured, not rushed**

Postpartum recovery isn't linear. Social media can make it look like everyone else is moving faster than you. They aren't. Your body did something extraordinary and it deserves time.

✓ **If your birth was complicated, you've had a GP or physio sign-off**

Significant tears, emergency caesarean, or any complications - a women's health physio check is the single best investment you can make before starting structured exercise.

## PART 2: WHERE TO START

### 1. Diaphragmatic breathing

**Why it matters:** Your diaphragm, core, and pelvic floor work as a connected system. Breathing properly is what reestablishes that connection after birth - and it can be started from the very first days.

**How to do it:** Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat. One hand on your chest, one on your belly. Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting your belly rise rather than your chest. As you breathe out through your mouth, feel your belly gently fall. You may notice a very soft lift in your pelvic floor as you exhale - this is a good sign.

**When:** Any time from the first days. Even 5 minutes lying quietly with this breath is valuable.

### 2. Pelvic floor reconnection

**Why it matters:** The pelvic floor supports your bladder, bowel, and uterus and has been under significant strain during pregnancy and birth. Reconnecting - both the lift and the full release - is the starting point for all postpartum recovery.

**How to do it:** In a comfortable position - lying, sitting, or standing - gently lift and squeeze your pelvic floor as if stopping the flow of urine. Hold for 3-5 seconds, then fully let go. The release is just as important as the lift. Aim for 10 repetitions, three times a day, but 5 done with full attention is better than 20 done in a rush.

**If you can't feel anything:** That's very common. Keep trying gently. It will come.

### 3. Short walks outside

Walking is the most natural form of postpartum movement - beneficial for physical recovery, mental health, sleep, and energy. In the first couple of weeks, 10 minutes is enough. Add 5 minutes every few days if everything feels fine. Any increase in bleeding, pelvic heaviness, or significant fatigue after walking is a sign to dial back.

### 4. Gentle upper back and shoulder stretches

Feeding, carrying, and looking down at your baby puts real strain on your upper back and neck. A few minutes a day makes a difference. Try sitting tall and rolling your shoulders back and down, drawing your shoulder blades gently together, holding for a few seconds and releasing. Gentle neck rolls side to side are also helpful.

## PART 3: WHEN TO SEE A PHYSIO FIRST

**If any of the following apply, the most useful thing you can do is see a women's health physiotherapist before starting anything more structured:**

- Pelvic heaviness, dragging, or a bulging sensation
- Leaking that doesn't improve after a few weeks of pelvic floor work
- Abdominal separation (diastasis recti) you're unsure how to manage
- A caesarean scar that feels tight, numb, or uncomfortable with movement
- Complicated birth or significant tears

**You can ask your GP for a referral in many areas, or find a private women's health physio. It's one of the most worthwhile investments you can make in your postpartum recovery.**

## READY FOR SOMETHING MORE STRUCTURED?

When you're through the early days and looking for a programme that's been built for exactly where you are, Mamawell has a two-week free trial.

**Inside:** resistance training, Pilates, physio-led pelvic floor sessions, breathwork, cardio - all from home.

**Start your free two-week trial at [mamawell.org](https://mamawell.org)**

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