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Winning at Post-Natal Weight Loss: Six Simple Strategies for New Moms — Part 3

By Susan Peach

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Peach

A healthy pregnancy almost always involves weight gain. But now that baby's here, you're probably wishing those extra pounds would hurry up and disappear! While it won't happen overnight, these six simple tips can help you lose that extra weight in a healthy way. (If you're looking for parts 1 and 2 of this article, you can find them both at <http://www.mambomoms.com/articles.html>)

5) Get moderate exercise on a regular basis. Of course, you should get the go ahead from your doctor first, and you will likely need to wait longer if you've had a caesarean birth, but most new moms can begin a gentle fitness program very soon after their baby is born.

Exercise is definitely one of those things that most of us feel obligated to do and few of us seem to enjoy. In fact, for many moms, having a new baby seems to be a great excuse not to exercise. After all, you're legitimately busy, sleep-deprived, and probably a bit nervous about leaving your precious bundle with someone else while you head to the gym. But wait! Who ever said you had to pump iron, punch a bag or jump around in a fitness class for an hour to get your exercise?

The whole key to sticking with a fitness program is to choose an activity you enjoy. If you enjoy hiking outdoors, why not invest in a baby carrier so you and your baby can do this together? There are all kinds of baby trailers on the market now so your baby can join you on a bike ride or even a cross country ski outing if these are activities you enjoy. If swimming is fun for you, why not offer to take a friend's teenager to the pool. She can sit close by with your baby on the pool deck while you do a few lengths, and then you and your baby can enjoy a leisurely lunch or cup of tea while the teen gets a chance to play in the pool in return for helping you out. Yoga classes for moms and babies are also popular now, and this can be a very enjoyable and relaxing way to spend time with your baby while you exercise.

For the new mom who wasn't active before pregnancy, gentle forms of exercise such as taking a stroll are ideal. If you can find another new mom close by to share this time with, your walks will become a

pleasant activity that you look forward to, instead of part of your dreaded post-natal fitness program. If your health unit or community nursing program offers a drop in program for new moms you will be able to connect with other moms there. Or perhaps you've stayed in touch with a mom you met in your pre-natal classes. As you start to feel more energetic you can increase the length and the intensity of your walks. And if the weather is bad you can always walk around the mall and enjoy the sights.

Gentle dancing or rocking while holding your baby is also excellent exercise that both of you can enjoy. When your baby is fussy or tired and nursing her doesn't seem to be helping, why not put on some music and introduce her to your favourite dance steps? She won't mind if you don't get the steps right, she'll just enjoy being close to you while you move, and you'll get the fitness benefits. Most babies will enjoy dancing with you even when they're not tired and cranky. As she gets older your dance dates will probably be greeted with giggles and squeals of delight.

Remember though that moderation in your exercise program is the key. Even if you bounce back quickly from your baby's birth and are feeling very energetic, be sure to start slowly and increase your exercise level gradually. Too much too soon can set you back by causing you to feel exhausted later on in the day. This can lead to grouchiness or a bout of the baby blues, neither of which will motivate you to continue exercising! Remember the old adage, "always leave 'em wanting more." This should be your fitness mantra in the first few postpartum months. In other words, stop before you've had enough and you'll be more likely to continue with your fitness program the next day.

6) Wear your baby often. Using a sling or carrier to keep baby close during the day will make your baby happier, plus it will give you a little extra weight to pack around as you do your daily chores and activities. It may not seem like much, but as your baby grows you'll be increasing the amount of weight you're carrying while you go about your daily routines. And that adds up to extra weight loss for you.

Instead of using a stroller when you take a walk, put baby in the carrier. Instead of putting her in a swing or rocking seat, rock her to sleep in your arms or in your baby carrier while you stand and gently bounce to and fro. When you go to the grocery store, carry her in a sling instead of putting her in the shopping cart. In fact, if you're lucky enough to live within walking distance of your grocery store, you can even make this a daily outing to pick up a few items each time. Your baby will enjoy the extra closeness of being in a sling or carrier as you do laundry, tend the garden, or even take some time out for a hobby like bird watching. Babies in our society seem to spend so much time strapped into various pieces of equipment. Most will love the opportunity to be closer to the person they most adore—you!

The bonus for mom is that extra weight to carry equals extra calories burned. Over the course of a year this can add up to significant weight loss, in a very healthy way for all concerned. Depending on how often you carry your baby, and how much she weighs, you can easily burn an extra 100–200 calories a day just by carrying her along for part of your day. Anytime you're on the go, try to carry your baby with you and you'll be getting the benefit of the increased calorie burn that comes with packing around an extra 10, 15, or 20 pounds.

And there you have it, six painless ways to lose those extra pregnancy pounds effortlessly and without stress. Remember, your baby won't be small for long so try not to get too preoccupied with weight loss. If you eat well most of the time, get some moderate exercise on a regular basis, and follow the rest of

the tips in this article series, you'll get back in shape with hardly a second thought.

Susan Peach is a retired La Leche League Leader, a dance and fitness instructor, and mother to two teenage boys. She is also the creator of Mambo Moms, a fun and gentle Latin dance based fitness program that helps new moms get back in shape while spending quality play time with their babies. Find out more at <http://www.mambomoms.com>

Post Natal Massage Therapy

By Caroline Colby

Some pregnant mums have it easy. Yet others have to go through many hours of labour.

But one thing's for sure. After the delivery process, many are just plain tired. In addition, having to breastfeed and nurse a newborn several times a night can be exhausting.

The new mum today does not have much time to rest and relax during her confinement period at home. She needs to get back to work pretty quickly and that means, facing added pressure to lose weight so that she can fit back to her office wear.

Post-natal massage may just be the solution to her needs. Here are 6 top benefits of Post-natal massage therapy:

1. Relaxation 2. Stress Relief 3. Relieves aches on shoulders or neck 4. Hasten the reduction of fluid retention. 5. Help uterus to shrink to original size 6. Reduce cellulite and help to tone up the body.

In many parts of Asia, many women before delivery would in fact, prebook sessions with an Indonesian massage therapist for post-natal massage. The treatment is a traditional one which has been handed down several generations and even practiced today. This treatment involves the use of a massage oil applied to the stomach and a tummy wrap (bengkung), essentially a cotton cloth of several metres. The bengkung is used to wrap the body so as to push up the uterus, clear water retention, wind, spasm, shrinks the tummy and helps to reduce weight. Post-natal massage is usually done in the privacy of one's own home.

For a mother that has delivered her baby naturally, it is generally pretty safe to go for a post-natal massage. For those that delivered by caesarian, be sure to consult your professional massage therapist or your doctor first. Most in fact, would recommend that you wait a few more weeks before proceeding with a post-natal massage.

Post-natal massage provides a sense of continuing comfort for the new mother. The aim of this massage is to give nurturing and emotional support as well as alleviate the muscle strain of labor and childbirth. Some post natal massage therapies also come with a detoxification ritual that rids the midriff of post birth bagginess.

In some instances, post-natal massage can also bring about a much shapelier silhouette, compared to the one just before pregnancy!

Caroline Colby is a publisher of information on Massage Therapy. She highly promotes Massage Therapy as a safe, holistic and effective alternative health therapy. Her site includes information on massage techniques, massage chairs, massage oils, etc. For tips and news updates, please visit her site at



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