

You're at least three months postpartum and feeling good.

Now what?

Training wisely postpartum is an opportunity to establish a rock solid foundation upon which you can build to even higher levels of athletic achievement. Naturally you may be eager to return to a competitive gym, a demanding group class, or your favorite long-distance run. You've earned it, right? But should you? It depends on your individualized healing. If you are already past the 3-month postpartum milestone and able to exercise at mild intensity without leaking, then you can gradually incorporate more challenging exercises safely. Here's how.

1. Smartly assess your own readiness for sport

For running and jumping tasks, 60-second intervals can be used to evaluate (leak-free) tolerance for physical impact.

Set a stopwatch for 60 seconds, and perform your chosen exercise (jogging, jumping rope, burpees, etc.).

- The rest intervals should be double the length of the work intervals (for example, a 2-minute break for every 1-minute of exercise).
- The intensity should be "moderate," meaning breathing is heavy, but you could maintain a conversation.

It is a good sign of readiness for higher impact activity if these intervals do not cause the onset of any symptoms. If they do, then spend more time at lower impact activities with more rest breaks so that your pelvic floor and other core muscles can continue to build strength, endurance, and coordination.

2. Build endurance first, then intensity

Start adding time to your training before adding effort. For example:

- Runners: add distance before adding speed or uphill climbs
- Weight lifters: add reps before increasing weight
- Dancers: make it through the whole class at a lighter pace before increasing the effort, tracking progress by "marking" when you get tired

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Allow yourself to reach symptom-free performance before attempting new challenges. Take rest breaks, and regress as needed. Most importantly: never compare yourself to others!

3. Let symptoms be your guide

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends that all adults aged 18-65 years should do moderate intensity aerobic activity for at least 30 minutes five days per week, or vigorous intensity aerobic activity for at least 20 minutes three days per week; as well as strength/resistance training activities for a minimum of two days per week. For resistance training, the ACSM recommends gradually increasing training volume by 2-10% per week for healthy adults.

As you build up to this, tune in to how you feel, taking care to avoid pushing too hard, too soon. (Returning to high demand activities too abruptly is a common cause of postpartum symptoms or injury.) The onset, return or worsening of leaking is a sign that the task is more than the core support system can handle; scale back and spend more time building patiently toward your ultimate goal. If you feel you are not making progress, we recommend seeing a pelvic health physical therapist for a physical evaluation and personalized advice.

4. Read up on the science behind K+ Training

There is no singular, simple indication for when it's safe to return to high-impact fitness and conditioning. Participating in fitness in a way you enjoy while listening to your body, is key. Here are some of the key references for our program and recommendations:

- [Clinical Commentary on Maximizing Recovery in the Postpartum Period: A Timeline for Rehabilitation from Pregnancy through Return to Sport](#)
Selman R, Early K, Battles B, Seidenburg M, Wendel E, Westerlund S. Maximizing Recovery in the Postpartum Period: A Timeline for Rehabilitation from Pregnancy through Return to Sport. Int J Sports Phys Ther. 2022 Oct 1;17(6):1170-1183. doi: 10.26603/001c.37863. PMID: 36237644; PMCID: PMC9528725.
- [Guidelines for Medical, Health, and Fitness Professionals on Return to Running Postpartum](#)

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- [American College of Sports Medicine Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd Edition](#)
- [American College of Sports Medicine Position Stand - Progression models in resistance training for healthy adults](#)

American College of Sports Medicine. American College of Sports Medicine position stand. Progression models in resistance training for healthy adults. Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2009 Mar;41(3):687-708. doi: 10.1249/MSS.0b013e3181915670. PMID: 19204579.