



THE ABDOMINALS AND YOU

Exercising those abdominals after having a baby isn't easy.

Having "you" time and then being aware of where they are can be challenging enough

Here is some advice to find them and get them to work for you again

Firstly, where are the "Transverse abdominus muscles"?

This muscle is the deepest layer of your abdominals. We need it to contract (or engage as we physios say!) at appropriate times during almost all of our functional activities. It is known to give support to our spines and pelvis. This in turn means we are less likely to have aches and injuries to other parts of our body.

What does it do?

After pregnancy and the delivery of your baby, it will not remember what to do and when! It is important to remind it and this can be achieved by exercising it and also being a little more conscious during everyday activities of when it is working. A little effort and thought in those early days after baby is born can go a long way to returning the function of these abdominals and also the appearance. It works along with the pelvic floor muscles so you can work them both together and feel the benefits; of which there are many!

How do I get it to work?!

You can lie, sit or stand comfortably. It is common to hear people say "It is like pulling your tummy button inwards". After you have had a baby, this can be difficult to appreciate where your tummy button and muscles are! To make sure you aren't pulling ALL the different layers of the abdominals in try the following exercise:

Focus your thoughts on the area below the tummy button in the pelvis.

Lift the front part of the pelvic floor up and inwards, keep lifting it up as far as you can

Imagine you are then pulling your lower tummy away in and away from your clothing (usually a waistband or knicker fabric). You should start to feel a tightening sensation in this area.

Some tips for those transverse abdominals to remember quickly what they need to do.....

Work with this in a variety of positions and during general daily activities (sat feeding baby, tidying, in/out car etc.

Take 5 minutes twice a day to properly focus on where they are and use your fingers/hands to give you some tactile feedback

Once you can feel a good contraction and hold it for up to 5 seconds, then you can step up to other exercises which can progress the abdominal recovery during the postnatal period.

POSTURE IS EVERYTHING! Being aware of how you sit and stand makes such a difference to the abdominal activity