

# Mom & Baby Yoga

with Jenn Carson

This gentle sequence is designed to help new mothers work on postpartum reintegration of their pelvic floor muscles. You should wait at least 6 weeks (8 weeks if you had a cesarean or any major complications) and get approval from your doctor during a postnatal check-up before participating.



## 1. Introduction

Today we're going to be gentle, patient, and persistent with ourselves. You may have some anxiety about getting back into shape after having a baby, but know that it takes time and we're going to approach it in a gentle way that minimizes your chance of injury. Take a comfortable seat on your mat and give your baby some nice gentle rubs (if they are awake).



**2. Pelvic Floor Pose** (a) Come into lying on your back with your baby (or a bean bag) on your belly. Your feet are planted on the floor with your knees pointing toward the ceiling. Place a block between your thighs and squeeze to activate the pelvic floor muscles. Inhale and feel your baby lift toward the ceiling. Exhale, pull your belly button down toward the ground. Repeat 5 times. (b) Tuck your chin and curl your upper body into a crunch position. Hold your baby with your hands so they don't slide off. Inhale and use your tummy muscles to raise your baby toward the ceiling. Exhale and pull the belly down, lowering your baby. Squeeze the block with your thighs. Repeat 5 times.



**3. Leg Crunch** (a) Raise your knees to a 90° angle and sit your baby up against your knees, if that's ok for their neck. Keep your head and shoulders on the floor. Inhale and lift belly. Exhale and squeeze the block, lowering your belly. Repeat 5 times. (b) With knees still raised to a 90° angle, squeeze the block and lift your upper body off the floor. Look toward your baby. Inhale and lift your belly. Exhale and lower your belly. Repeat 5 times.



## 4. Knee Twist

Remove the block from between your thighs and lower your feet to the floor. Drop both knees to one side, keeping your baby on your belly and your shoulders/head planted. Take 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.



**5. Leg Lift** (a) Straighten your legs and hold your baby on your belly. Lift one leg a few inches off the floor and hold the position for 5 breaths. Lower the leg and repeat on the other side. (b) Repeat (a), but this time raise your head and shoulders off the floor while you lift your foot. Engage your tummy muscles and hold for 5 breaths for each leg lift. If this is too hard on your neck, repeat (a).

## 6. Shoulder Twist

While lying on your back, plant your feet on the floor with knees pointed toward the ceiling. Hold your baby in your arms (or clasp opposite elbows). Rock your arms and baby back and forth across your body, keeping your torso planted on the ground. If it feels good for your neck, you can turn your head and watch your baby as you rock them back and forth. Repeat 5 times on each side.



**7. Modified Bridge Pose** (a) Place the block between your thighs with your knees bent and feet planted on the floor. Your baby can sit on your belly. Hold on tight, they are going for a ride! Lift your bottom off the floor, squeezing the block with your thighs. Take 5 belly breaths and then lower down slowly.

(b) Repeat (a), but this time squeeze the block and lift one leg, straightening it as much as you can. Keep your hips in the air for 3 breaths and then lower down. Repeat on the other side.





**8. Leg Rotations** Lying on your back, lift your legs in the air while holding your baby over your torso. Rotate your lower legs, making large circles, toward the outside walls of the room, alternating legs so you don't bang your ankles together. After one minute, go the other direction, with legs rotating toward the center.



**9. Shoulder Strap Stretch** (a) Sit in easy pose with your baby in your lap. Holding the strap in your hands at a comfortable distance for your shoulders, reach your arms overhead. Lower your arms in front of your torso. Repeat 5 times. (b) Still sitting in easy pose and holding the strap, raise your arms over your head. Tilt your arms to one side, leaning with your torso. Lift your arms back overhead and lower on the other side. Repeat 5 times on each side.



**10. Cow Face Pose** (a) Sitting in easy pose with your baby in your lap, hold the strap in your right hand. Reach your right arm above your head and let the strap dangle down your back. Reach up with your left hand from behind and grab the strap. (b) Walk your fingers toward each other until you feel a good stretch. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.



**11. Boat Pose** (a) Sit with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor, holding your baby in your lap (if they will cooperate!). Grasp the back of your knees. (b) Inhale and lift one leg to the same height as your chin. Exhale and lower. Repeat on the other side. Then try with both feet lifted. Repeat the whole sequence 3 times.



**12. Uplifting Pose** (a) Cross your ankles and place your baby in your lap. Place your hands on the floor beside your hips. Lift your seat off the floor. (b) Option to place blocks under your hands to make it easier. Hold for 10 breaths.



**13. Child's Pose** (a) Kneel on the floor with your knees spread wide. Place your baby on the floor facing you (or optional tummy time!) with your arms outstretched. Take 5 deep breaths.



(b) Walk your hands to the left to stretch out your intercostal muscles. Take 5 breaths. Walk your hands to the right, take 5 more breaths. Come back to center.



**14. Storytime** Enjoy a story with your baby. The library has lots of board books available! Try picking one with high contrast (like black and white) illustrations. *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle are classics. Reading to your baby now will help develop a lifelong love of literature.



**15. Savasana** Now it's time for *Savasana* and a snuggle. Lie on your back with your baby on your belly or next to you (option to keep knees bent and feet flat on the floor). Drop your breath into the lower lobes of your lungs and breathe deeply. Your baby will feel your calmness. Close your eyes. Stay for as long as you'd like.