

PRE NATAL DAILY STRETCHES

MOVE SAFELY THROUGH YOUR TRIMESTERS BY EXPLORING YOUR
BODY MOVEMENTS AND ENJOYING THE BENEFITS OF A
CONTROLLED STRETCH

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Suitable for all 3
trimesters



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Alignment and Movement explained in each exercise. Use the images for guidance and enjoy the benefits of these stretches.

Suitable for all 3 trimesters. Modifications explained in pages 2, 3 and 4

Feel free to drop me an email if you have any questions or need further guidance. info@activwellness.ch

1 Modifications for 1st - 2nd and 3rd trimester

All the stretches mentioned in this ebook are safe to be done regardless of your trimester.

You will be mindful that your belly shall be growing and needing more space for you to do certain movements such as leaning forward or twisting.

Always straighten your spine on every inhale and dive into the stretch on every exhale. Use your abdominals to help you deepen the intensity safely, should you need to.

Each day is a different day and your muscles tighten or contract and loosen or lax constantly thus giving you the feeling of more tightness on some days and more flexibility on others.

You shall want to have your legs open more than hip width apart when standing during your second and third trimester as your center of gravity shifts.

Abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing keeping the inhalation and exhalation through your nose will be crucial to lowering your heart rate, calming your nervous system and allowing full range of motion of your diaphragm. This muscle will be compromised in space towards the end of your pregnancy so thus type of breathing will immensely help.

Glute activation any time you are in a reverse table top, bridge or plank position in order to help you against gravity and act as a co-contractor to your deep core muscles.

HAPPY STRETCHING!

1 Modifications for 1st - 2nd and 3rd trimester

FIRST TRIMESTER

Being on your belly is ok up until a 12 to 16 week mark or depending on how sore your breasts feel, the baby is protected enough and will not be "squished" no worries.

Chest Lifts and Abdominal work are ok as long as you are breathing and moving properly. Inhale to prepare and exhale for effort.

Inversions if you had not been practicing them before are not recommended until after the 12 week mark has passed.

Continue your activity as you had done before getting pregnant and be mindful of excess dancing, jumping and bouncing as these movements generate more vibrations and may not allow your body to do as it needs at this point in time. Remember, it is working very hard right now even though you do not see or maybe feel anything yet.

SECOND TRIMESTER

Welcome the progress and say hello to a bit more energy! You might not see your belly popping out just yet but it will come, during this trimester things are constantly changing and your workouts will have to continuously be adapted to your growing belly.

Some excess stretches might feel too tight down the midline of your abdomen (rectus abdominis) therefore take it easy. You shall need a wider stance than hip width distance and you shall feel the need to stretch your hips and inner thighs or adductors more frequently. Laying on your belly will not be recommended now and slowly all the abdominal crunches and sit ups shall fade away from your routine. Anything generating excess intra abdominal pressure will not be recommended.

When stretching and twisting ensure you do open twists to allow the baby some space at all times.

1 **Modifications for 1st - 2nd and 3rd trimester**

Dizziness might start playing a role when moving from standing to sitting and you can also feel that your shoulders and neck get a bit more tense, nothing to worry about, make sure you stretch it nicely.

Here are two ways:

Bring your right ear to your right shoulder then slowly come back to center; left ear to left shoulder and slowly come back to center. Lastly, gently bring your chin to your chest and slowly go back to center.

SELF MASSAGE FOR YOUR TRAPEZIUS MUSCLE

Release neck tension with this lovely self neck massage.

Place two fingers, middle and index of each hand, just behind your ear lobes on the soft part. Move them in small circles all the way up to the start of your occiput (occipital bone) and go back down in small circles to the starting point. You will feel way better after a few rounds of this!

It is a great trimester and the extra energy will feel great for your workouts!

THIRD TRIMESTER

You are fully showing now with a gorgeous belly. Things to consider at this point in time is that you might become tired faster, you might need to take deeper and slower breaths in order to avoid sudden fatigue and you might need to take more breaks when doing a workout.

Staying on your wrists for too long is not recommended, shift the weight towards your shins and front of the feet instead and ensure you mobilize your hips, feet and wrists a lot.

Stretches can still be done by having a wider opening with your legs or by using the fitness ball or wall as a support.

Laying on your back on a mat shall be uncomfortable so reduce the time spent like that or pad it up.

2 Reason why you need to stretch mindfully and with awareness

During pregnancy there is a hormone release called 'Relaxin' that helps our ligaments, cartilages and muscles lax or become looser.

This is done in preparation for birth in order to allow your pelvis to widen, your hips to broaden and your entire musculature to be able to stretch and carry the baby in your belly for 40 weeks.

Said hormone gives you an instant feeling of being able to stretch more than what you ever used to. Stretching mindfully and with caution is extremely important in order not to over do it and stretch beyond the limitation of your joints.

Together with this, your bone structure might also shift, in particular the pelvic region due to either postural imbalances, poor posture, sleeping positions or even the way the baby is positioning itself.

Always breathe deeply whilst stretching, Inhale to lengthen and exhale to dive deep; do not go beyond your capabilities and seek the assistance of a certified prenatal manual therapist, osteopath or physiotherapist to aid if you feel any aches or pains in specific areas of your body.

I teach different Nerve Flossing Techniques and specific Muscle Releases during my one on one sessions in order to pass you the knowledge you need and be able to do this by yourself in the comfort of your home.

Forms of strengthening during pregnancy with supervised prenatal sequences are great in order to keep your joints stable whilst relaxin is making everything more mobile.

HAPPY STRETCHING!

3 TVA and Pelvic Floor - Activation and Engagement

TVA equals your transverse abdominis, deep core muscle layer acting as a corset around your waist, back and abdomen.

Pelvic Floor is a group of muscle layers connecting your pubic bone, to your coccyx and both your sit bones.

They both are considered part of the core muscles group and are engaged or contracted during the process of exhalation. Therefore are connected to our act of respiration.

It is important to familiarize yourself with both muscles and understand how to both activate and engage them properly.

Activation is knowing how to contract the muscle, understanding where it is and being able to focus your mind on it in an isolated fashion.

Engagement is keeping that specific muscle active with a repetition of a movement or through a full breath cycle against its intrinsic natural movements.

VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES

- For TVA you can imagine a corset around your waist that gets tight on every exhale. You shall feel the contraction of the muscle in a 360 degree fashion as an inward and upward pressure. Placing two fingers just besides both your hip bones, on the soft part will help you feel the tightness of said structure.

- For your Pelvic Floor you can imagine all 4 corners described above holding a hammock, visualize this hammock and on every exhale, all 4 corners draw inwards and upwards.

It is extremely important to understand the full release of the Pelvic Floor during inhalation when closer to your due date as it will help you tremendously.

4

Prenatal Stretches

CAT & COW

Alignment - Ensure your wrists are directly below your shoulders and your knees are directly below your hips. In the third trimester you shall avoid staying on your wrists for long periods of time.

Feet flat on the floor and pressing against the mat both with the front part of your feet and with your hands in order to distribute weight and ease off possible pain in the knees.

Do not sink into your shoulders, keep your spine neutral to begin with.

Movement - Inhale to push the ground away from you, sacrum to the ceiling slightly arching your lower back and look up whilst opening your chest and expanding your shoulders wide, sternum forward.

Exhale to bring your chin to your chest, activate your TVA and round your spine from the tailbone to the crown of the head. Push the ground away from you.



Practice 4 rounds.

*** During the end of second and entire third trimester you might need to rest in between rounds in order to release tension on your wrists.**

Prenatal Stretches

SEATED CAT & COW

Alignment - Sit in a comfortable cross legged position with your hands on your knees. Lengthen your spine and slightly bring your chin to your chest. Ensure your lumbar spine has its neutral curvature and not more than that. Rib cage is in and TVA is nicely engaged.

Movement - Inhale as you press against your knees, bring the sternum forward and up and look up to the ceiling (ensure you gain thoracic extension first before extending the neck) Your lumbar spine shall curve a bit more now. Exhale as you come through neutral and bring your chin to your chest, fully stretching your arms and rounding your spine from sacrum to cervical. Let all the air out before you take the next inhale through neutral to go back into extension.



Practice 4 rounds.

*** Safe for all trimesters. If suffering from lower back pain you want to be mindful of the extension of the spine, do it per section - lumbar, thoracic and cervical.**

Prenatal Stretches

REST POSITION AND PUPPY POSE

Alignment - Rest position on the mat to be performed with knees open to the width of the mat, big toes touching and stretching the arms away actively. Hips go to heels and forehead rests on the mat. Head below heart allows for full relaxation.

Rest position on the fitness ball encourages deeper shoulder girdle stretch and is to be aligned as the previous pose. Lumbar tension also lessens with these stretches.

Puppy Pose on the bottom left image is to be aligned with hips over knees at all times and front part of the feet flat on the mat, arms stretch out and away and forehead rests on the mat.

Movement - Inhale to lengthen and exhale to dive deep. In the rest positions aim to stretch in two opposite directions by aiming the hips to heels and the fingertips to the front edge of the mat. Knees wide open allow the belly to comfortably rest in the middle. In the puppy pose you can dive deep from the shoulder girdle on each exhale and release tension in that area too.



Stay for 5 to 10 cycles of breath.

PELVIC TILTS ON FITNESS BALL

Alignment - Lay on the fitness ball by leaning against it with your lumbar and thoracic spine. Keep your knees bent and directly over the heels. Feet are open hip width distance and parallel to one another. Keep your TVA (deep abdominal muscles) engaged and the neck in line with the spine. Hands can rest on your hip bones on either side. Find a neutral spine, a point in between anterior and posterior tilting.

Movement - Slight movements, not exaggerated. Inhale and tilt your pelvis so you exaggerate an anterior curve in your lumbar spine by bringing the coccyx closer to the fitness ball. Exhale and tilt your pelvis to a posterior tilt sort of "flattening your spine" or tucking your tailbone under by lifting it off the ball.

Ensure your feet are firmly pressing against the mat and your knees keep the same distance throughout and do not open wide. Keep your TVA engaged at all times with increased activation during your exhalation.*

- Read page 06 for TVA engagement.



Practice 5 gentle rounds.

Prenatal Stretches

SHOULDER MOBILIZATION AND SPINE RELEASE ON FITNESS BALL

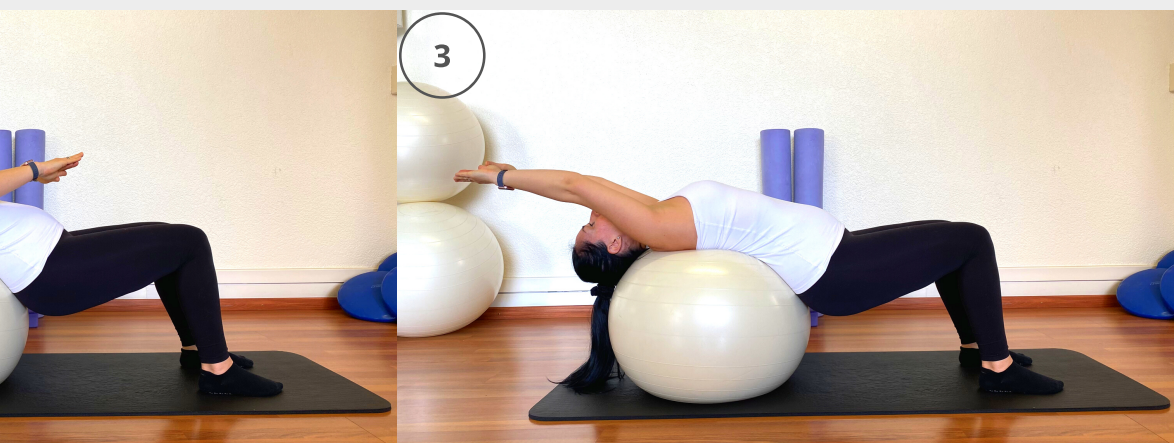
Alignment - Lean on the ball with your entire spine, arms wrapped around either side and palms open wide to create a supporting base. Extend your cervical spine and tilt your head back. Keep your TVA engaged, feet open hip width apart and parallel to one another.

Neutral spine and neutral pelvis to be maintained for the starting pose.

Image number one.

Movement - Inhale, Exhale and gently lift your arms and bring your hands together, side by side. On your next inhale you shall press your feet firmly against the mat, Exhale and bring your arms above your head keeping your ribcage in (do not let it pop out); Inhale in the extension and exhale to come back to the starting point.

If experiencing too much intra abdominal pressure you shall not bring your arms too far back.



Practice 5 rounds.

Breathe mindfully throughout and be aware of your body positioning and muscle activation

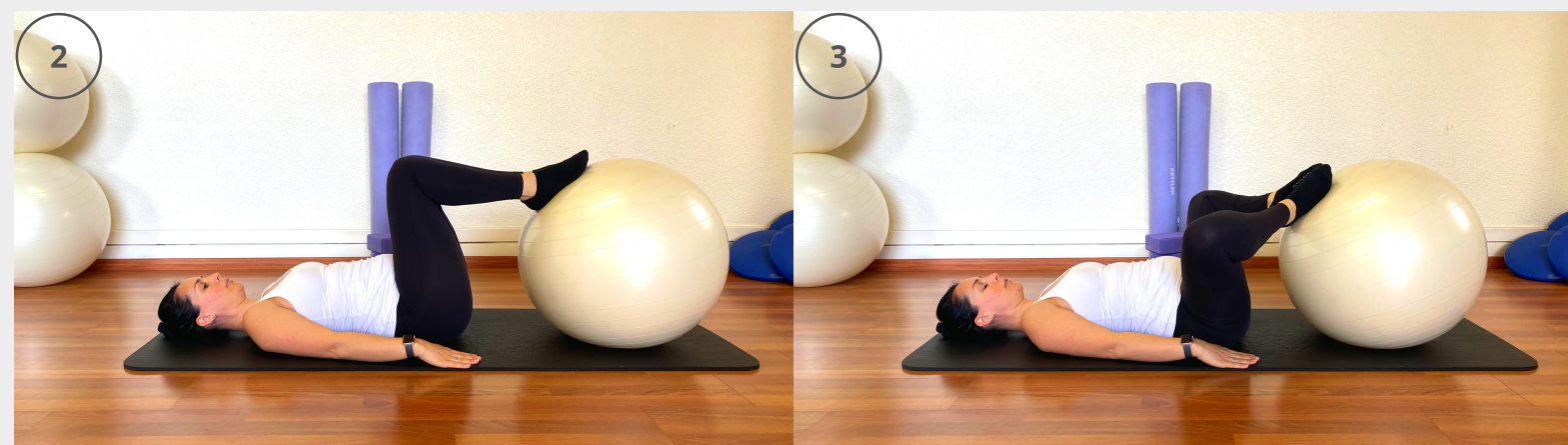
Prenatal Stretches

HIP MOBILIZATION ON FITNESS BALL

Alignment - Begin by laying on your back (choose a cushioned mat for this purpose and avoid it during the third trimester if you feel too uncomfortable) Have the fitness ball by your feet and gently place both calf muscles against the ball and heels pressing on the surface.

Arms are resting by your side, triceps are active and pressing against the mat. Shoulders relaxed, ribcage in and head in line with the spine. Spine is neutral.

Movement - Inhale to prepare and as you exhale you press your heels against the ball and bend your knees towards your body bringing the ball closer to you. Inhale and open your knees out to the side (frog style), Exhale and push the ball away again coming back to the starting point. Slow and gentle movements creating a good hip mobilization.



Practice 8 rounds.

*** Safe for all trimesters as long as there is comfort laying supine (on your back). Choose a cushioned enough mat for this exercise.**

Prenatal Stretches

MERMAID STRETCH

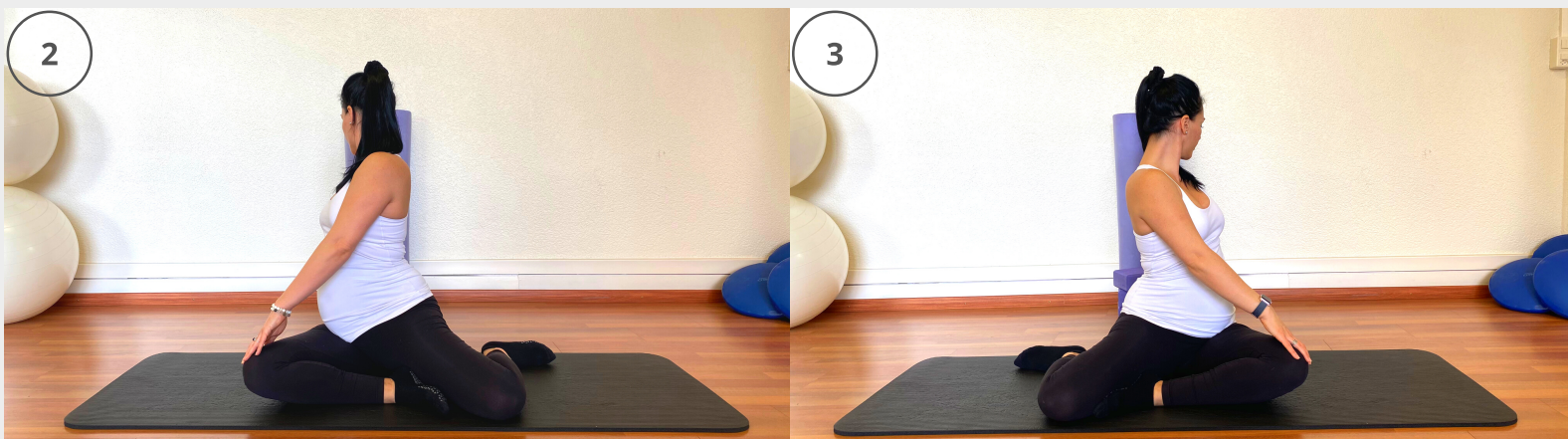
Alignment - Sit comfortably on the mat and take a mermaid pose with legs in z position. With both knees facing one side but ensuring hips are facing the front. Just imagine you have laser lights on each hip bone and they must be parallel and facing the front.

Spine is nice and lengthened and head is straight. Inhale and as you exhale you place:

- left hand on right knee if knees are facing the right or
- right hand on left knee if knees are facing the left.

Keep those hips facing forward.

Movement - From this point Inhale to lengthen the spine and as you exhale you twist towards the back shoulder and look behind. You can lift the opposite bum cheek off the mat for extra twist. Stay in the open twist for a couple of breath cycles and on the next inhale you come back to center and switch sides.



Practice 2 rounds. One on each side and remember to BREATHE!!

*** Safe for all trimesters**

Prenatal Stretches

HIP STRETCH

Alignment - Sit with legs crossed in a box shape in front of you, not a yoga lotus pose but foot on knee and more of a square shape. We shall aim to stretch the muscles around the hip joint safely.

Ensure your hips are facing the front of the mat, spine is long and crown of the head is being "pulled to the ceiling". Shoulders relaxed, ribcage in and TVA active.

Movement - Inhale to lengthen the spine and commencing from the position on image number 2, you shall exhale and stretch your arms out in front of you nice and slowly, active arms and palms pressing against the floor/mat.

Go to where you are comfortable and to where your belly allows you to move, lower your head if you want/can. Stay in the stretch for maximum 3 breath cycles and on the last exhale you use your TVA to come back to the starting point. Extend and shake your legs out front before switching leg position and going into the stretch again.

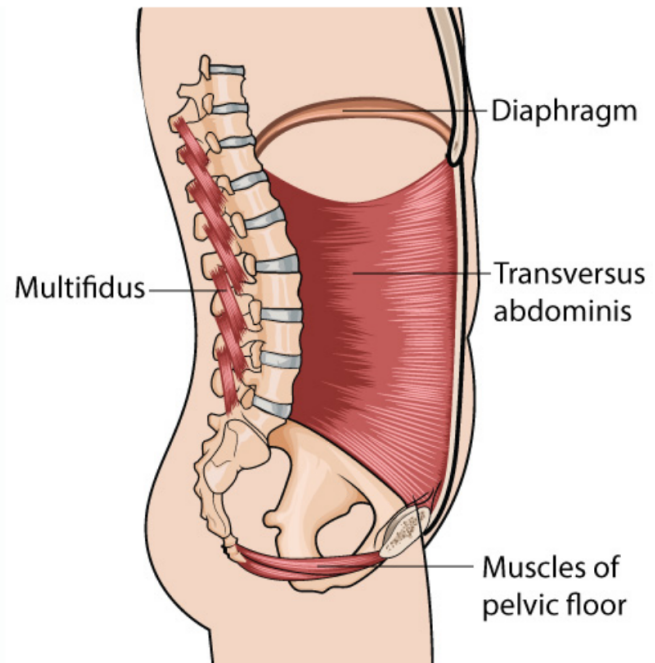
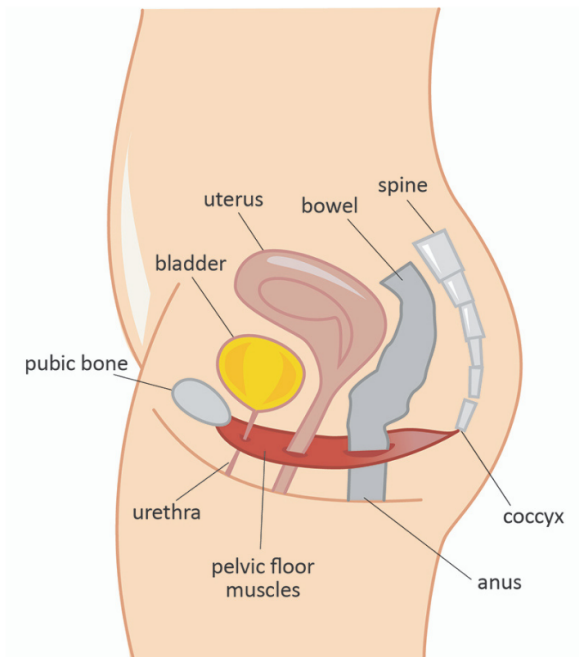
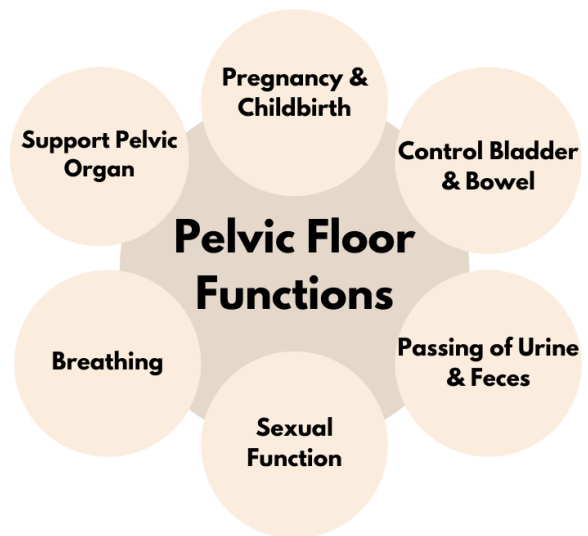


Practice 1 round each. Left leg on top and right leg on top.

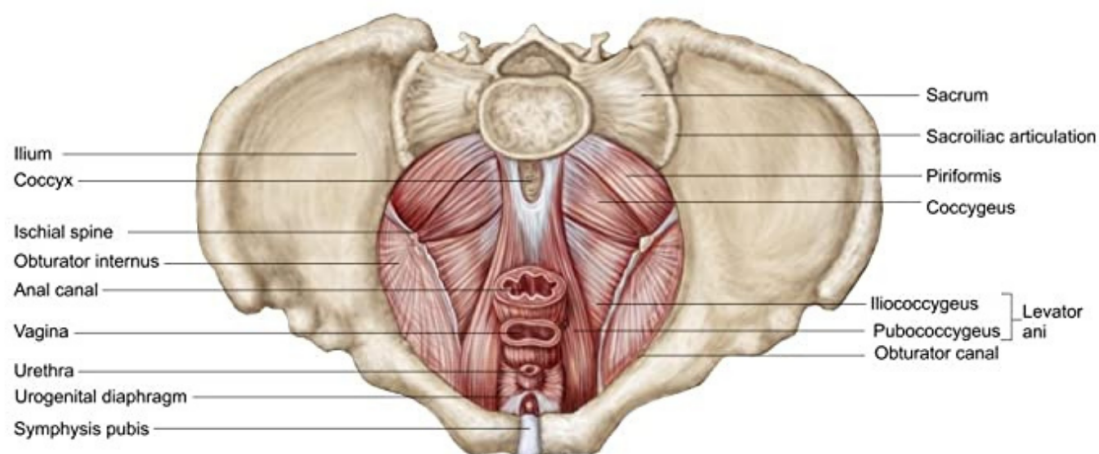
*** In the third trimester you might not be able to lower your head, this is due to the belly being bigger. Keep your hands pressing against the floor/mat and lengthen your spine on every inhale.**

The Pelvic Floor

PROPERTY OF ACTIV WELLNESS



**Female Pelvic Diaphragm
Superior view**



I am a Certified Pre and Post Natal instructor by Body Hack, U.A.E – Credentials are available on my LinkedIn page or Website – Rocio Dos Santos Arenas. Kindly ensure you are or have been cleared by your doctor for exercise and stretching, that you do not suffer from Carpel Tunnel Syndrome, Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction or any other ailment that might potentially be aggravated by conducting these stretches and movements.

All information shared is for educational purposes only and framed through the lens of birth in Europe. Please consult with your doctor before attempting any of the suggested things. Anything mentioned in any of my videos or ebooks are never to replace the advice of your doctor or midwife. Make sure to check with them before you try anything suggested in my videos or ebooks and if you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me on info@activwellness.ch.
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