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FITNESS & LIFESTYLE

## **The 4 P's: What to Watch for When Training In Pre/Postnatal Stages**

When we are training in prenatal and postnatal stages, we tend to think our focus should be on the exercises we are choosing. While these can be important in supporting our core and pelvic floor while big changes are taking place in our bodies, **the most important thing to realize is that it is how we do an exercise and how our body responds.**

**Our focus and training goals in these stages shifts from intensity to intention. We want to support our long-term health goals, including respect the core and pelvic floor, which is extremely vulnerable during this time. This is not the time to try to “push through” whatever phase we are in right now.** No matter how fit we were before our pregnancy, when we are prenatal or rehabbing our body postpartum, it's important to respect the process.

Generally, **when prenatal, we are training for a strong, comfortable pregnancy and to be able to resume our lifestyle and activities through postpartum and beyond.** We are going to want to **decrease our intensity and the loads we are using** during exercise during this time. **We want exercise to feel “somewhat hard - hard” and to be able to carry on a conversation. We want to consider our pelvic floor and use caution when using impact, especially in the second and third trimester.**

Further resources for training in prenatal stages: Please read the [CSEP Guidelines for Training in Pregnancy](#).

**When we are postpartum, our body has undergone a great many changes. It will take time and deliberate, intentional decisions to feel like ourselves again.** It is not a race and we will be much better served in the long run to value intention over intensity.

It's important to know that once we are postpartum, we are ALWAYS postpartum. Symptoms can come and go for many different reasons. That is why it is important to focus less on being "healed" or thinking of symptoms as a problem that we never have to think about again once they are solved. If we think instead of our symptoms as information our body is giving us, it sets us up for realistic expectations and less frustration. We can troubleshoot and use our strategies whenever symptoms arise. We can feel confident in knowing we are respecting our bodies where they are at but are able to progress forward.

**To know whether your body is handling an exercise well, some key things to watch for are the 4 P's:**

- **Pain** (any pain whatsoever but including back, pelvic, or abdominal pain)
- **Peeing** (leaking is common but never normal and a sign we need to revisit the way we are doing something because our body is not handling it well.)
- **Prolapse** (feelings of heaviness in the pelvis or if we have a diagnosed prolapse and something is making us feel symptomatic. This deserves our attention.)
- **Peaking** (coning or doming of the abdominal wall. If we aren't able to hold proper core engagement in an exercise, that is also a time to slow down and revisit our strategy or readiness.)

If any of these symptoms arise, there are modifications available in the workout pdfs and demonstrated in the video. If you have further questions, please feel free to reach out for support in the Facebook group!