

Working out after baby

August 10 2018, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Losing weight about 6 months after giving birth lowers a woman's risk of being overweight in the future.

The best strategy to get back to pre-baby weight is a combination of diet and exercise, rather than diet alone. That's because exercise boosts heart health and helps preserve muscle when you're limiting calorie intake. It also takes more calories to maintain muscle than to maintain fat, which means you'll burn more even at rest.

Once your doctor gives the OK, ease back into your [exercise routine](#). Take a gradual but steady approach. Each day, eat a little less and exercise a little more. You might start by taking baby on short walks. Resist trying to see instant results. Rapid weight loss isn't healthy, especially if you're breast-feeding.

Because women who breast-feed are at temporary risk of loss in [bone mineral density](#), do weight-bearing exercises, such as [strength training](#). This will minimize bone loss and decrease your risk of osteoporosis in later years.

Also, take a complete approach to exercise by including various types. One study found that a combination of strength training and [aerobic exercise](#) three days a week over 16 weeks reduced body fat and increased lean mass, even without dieting.

Take a few precautions to make exercise safer, however.

Avoid working out in extreme temperatures and high humidity. Have a nutritious snack about an hour before your chosen activity, and drink some water before, during and after to stay properly hydrated.

You'll also feel more comfortable if you wear clothing that allows for a full range of motion while offering needed support. That includes a supportive bra—if your breasts have changed since giving birth, you might need a new one in a different size.

More information: The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has answers to frequently asked questions about [exercise](#)

[after pregnancy](#) to get you started safely.

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Citation: Working out after baby (2018, August 10) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-baby.html>

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