

# Are the Effects of Pregnancy, Labor, Delivery and Post Partum Pain Slowing You Down?

By Zoe Fackelman

**P**regnancy, labor and delivery and post-partum pain can cause functional limitations and wreak havoc on your body. A physical therapist (PT) trained specifically to treat women in this special phase of life is extremely valuable in helping you get through the transitions your body makes while pregnant and while recovering. In addition, treatment and self-care education can help prevent post-menopausal problems such as painful intercourse or urinary incontinence.

When you find out you are pregnant it is wise to have a consultation visit to learn the correct way to exercise while pregnant to avoid joint pain. The consultation visit will provide you with:

- The knowledge of how to exercise during pregnancy. According to

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, women during pregnancy are advised to exercise three to four times per week for 15 minutes at a time at a heart rate of 140 beats per minute.

- An assessment of the pelvic floor musculature using biofeedback to assure proper pelvic floor muscle contraction technique and instruct in a pelvic floor exercise program during pregnancy and postpartum to prevent urinary incontinence.

- Techniques to treat and to avoid any type of pain during your special time of pregnancy and postpartum; assess alignment, posture, muscle tightness, muscle strength and perform appropriate treatment. Education in proper ways to move and position yourself and your baby is called body

mechanics. This is a key factor in being pain free during pregnancy and with your child postpartum.

- Tools to prevent hernia and belly bulge after labor and delivery. Instruction on safe abdominal, low back and hip exercises is imperative to restore core tone and strength.

- Techniques to prevent painful sexual intercourse postpartum. Proper technique of perineal massage, which has been seen to reduce the incidence of episiotomy and perineal tears during birth. Perineal massage and techniques administered by a women's health specialist will also assist in reducing scar tissue that develops post episiotomy and tearing during labor and delivery.

Prenatal assessments are most beneficial in determining your needs and offering the best care and prevention.

"Physical therapy during pregnancy can prove to be useful for remedying common discomforts like back pain or for enhancing your body's ability to have an easier and smoother pregnancy and birth: according to the American Pregnancy Association. "Physical therapy is not just for recovery. Talk to your health care provider about incorporating physical therapy into your prenatal care."



*Zoe Fackelman is a physical therapist and the owner of Lake Country Physical Therapy and Sportscare, PC in Canandaigua. For more information, visit [www.lakecountrypt.com](http://www.lakecountrypt.com) or send her an email at [zoe@lakecountrypt.com](mailto:zoe@lakecountrypt.com) or call 585-396-1400.*