

# MAMAWELL

## PREGNANT NOT POWERLESS!

Stay energised, strong & keeping moving through your pregnancy.

Hello, I'm Rosie.

I'm the founder of Mamawell - the community & workouts designed to take you through pregnancy, postpartum & beyond.

Mamawell workouts focus on how to move in the most beneficial way through pregnancy - enabling you to feel confident and empowered. The things you can add and optimise safely to make you feel your best.

Keeping strong & fit is so beneficial through pregnancy\* and beyond, both mental and physical. Reasons to prioritise exercise during pregnancy include: reducing the risk of gestational diabetes, increasing energy, better sleep, keeping blood

pressure level, improving mood, reducing risk of constipation, reducing risk of back pain. Exercise can also help reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, plus it can help speed up recovery times post-birth.

I've put together some of my top tips for you to save and come back to. You have a FREE week trial of all my workouts, so be sure to check out [www.mamawell.org](http://www.mamawell.org) to access this today!



\*in a 'normal' uncomplicated pregnancy. All information here for guidance only. Seek advice from a medical professional where needed.

*Rosie x*

## THE ABDOMINALS

There are several layers of abdominal muscle that provide postural support, and allow for all types of movement. The abdominal muscles connect to the pelvis and back, and they work in conjunction. Being able to activate your abdomen optimally will likely help support the baby bump more effectively, reducing weight on the pelvis, possibly reducing the risk of lower back pain and keeping posture better aligned. The deep abdominal muscles provide support all around the abdomen as well as activate during labour, so being aware of them is helpful. As the abdomen grows in pregnancy you'll notice you'll feel different in this area - maybe you'll be less able to activate these muscles. Try a few of these exercises and see what you notice. These can be done every day, or several times a week - as feels good for you.

### ACTIVATION WITH BREATH

Positioned on all fours, hands under shoulders, knees under hips. Back is straight and still throughout the exercise.

Full inhale and let the abdomen expand, don't push it outwards but feel it fill.

Full exhale and at the end of this movement pull the belly up and in towards the spine. Try and feel the connection & hold this position for a count of 3-5 (whatever comfortable for you) then release an inhale again.

Repeat up to 10 times.



### ARM EXTENSION IN PLANK

Full inhale as before. At the end of the exhale find the connection in the abdomen. Holding this engagement in the core, extend one arm straight in front, parallel to the floor. Place back on the floor under the shoulder & stretch the other arm.

Do 4 in total, then relax the stomach. Engage and repeat, your choice of how many sets.



Take a plank position with the knees down. For more support of the abdomen & back, have the knees under the shoulders. If you're feeling strong or for more of a challenge, place the knees further back.

Tap the right hand to left shoulder & place back onto the floor. Try to do this with control, not too quickly. Do 4 in a row & change sides.

Play around with no. of reps to suit your energy & strength - up to 10 on each side. Notice the abdomen naturally activates. Try to resist rocking to the side on each movement - notice when you do!



### SIDE PLANKS

Planks with the knees down are a great way to keep the abdominals & back strong without putting too much pressure on that area. You'll still really feel the activation.

Sit on your side, knees bent, weight supported on your elbow. On the exhale, push the hips up to a plank position and hold there for up to a count of 10 - build up to this. Try and engage the core a bit in this position - imagine gently pulling the stomach in.

For a challenge, try a 'thread the needle'. Bring the stretched arm across the body and tuck it in, or gently tap the floor, and then stretch again. Try around 8 then switch sides. Make sure to exhale on the thread, inhale on the stretch.



## THE PELVIC FLOOR

All women need the pelvic floor muscles to be strong, especially during pregnancy and thereafter. The pelvic floor muscles form a muscular floor to the pelvis and support abdominal organs as well as the growing foetus. They stretch to allow the baby to pass through and then should contract back to normal post-birth.

The pelvic floor musculature will be weaker post birth, so PF exercises at that time should be a priority. It's important to find time for them during pregnancy to increase strength, endurance and ability to respond under pressure.

The pelvic floor muscles are made up of both slow twitch and fast twitch fibres, meaning they can respond to both needs of sustained endurance and a sudden rise in pressure. So, we should be exercising the pelvic floor in both a slow controlled way, and faster sharper contractions and release.

Get in a comfortable position, try seated with a straight spine or standing.

Take a few deep cleansing breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Then, inhale deeply and as you exhale, imagine drawing up through your anus and holding there. Don't tighten your buttocks or tense any part of your body. Let the pelvic floor relax gently and then inhale to start the process again. After a few cycles, start incorporating the front section of your pelvic floor, the contraction is a bit like when you try and stop yourself urinating.

These moves can be done in two ways:

- Slowly: as described above. Hold the contraction for a slow count of 5, then release. Build up to around 10 at this speed.
- Quickly: Contract (pull up) your front and/or back passages and then pulse them for a count of 10. Relax, then repeat another 5 times.

Don't forget to breathe deeply at the start & end of these contractions. It's important to fully relax the muscle in between contractions - but don't press it 'down', just notice it soften. If you have pelvic girdle pain or are having issues with continence during your pregnancy, it's advised to seek guidance from a pelvic health physiotherapist.

## CARDIO, IMPACT & RESISTANCE

Cardio exercise is generally fine to do throughout pregnancy & provides great positive endorphins. Be mindful of energy levels and adjust the intensity as necessary. Always take a break if you feel lightheaded, and drink plenty of water throughout all workouts.

Having a baby requires strength, so resistance training is great to incorporate. Avoid straining and holding the breath, and be mindful of form when lifting weights as you have an altered centre of gravity with the bump growing. It's a good idea to stick with movements that you're familiar with, or seek guidance from an experienced pregnancy specific instructor.

It's important to keep breathing throughout all movements, as all oxygen taken in will also go to the baby. A good indicator of intensity is the 'talk test' - always being able to hold a conversation even if a bit out of breath. You should never be on the floor gasping for breath.

Don't underestimate rest days & notice when certain movements might start to feel less good on your body. During pregnancy your body will quite often tell you when it's time to change something, so watch for signals.

Be aware of over-stretching or loading up the body with too much weight during pregnancy as relaxin will be present in the joints. This hormone is produced to relax the ligaments and soften the area around the pelvis to facilitate childbirth. It will be present in the whole body, so you may find you are more flexible & unstable. Be particularly careful with shoulder, hip, knee & ankle joints.



## LOOKING TO KEEP MOVING WITH CONFIDENCE?

Mamawell is your complete body & mind toolkit for pregnancy! It includes workouts, Pilates, Yoga, physio-led sessions, breathwork and mindfulness. Rather than being prescriptive on exercises for each week, it allows for the fact we are all different. In the varied on-demand full length workouts & classes, you'll learn how to adapt your workout to your changing body.

Start your FREE trial now and work confidently through your pregnancy and beyond with us.

To join today, head to [WWW.MAMAWELL.ORG](http://WWW.MAMAWELL.ORG). and then download our free app for workouts wherever you are!

SEE YOU ON THE MAT!

