

## Safemoms Fitness Guide (watch the videos at [www.safemoms.org](http://www.safemoms.org))

### Reverse the Changes of Pregnancy by Correcting Your Posture and Stretching

During pregnancy, the muscles in the front of your shoulders and hips can become tight.

Stretch at least three times a week to prevent shoulder and low back injuries.



Doing the hip stretch you are stretching the muscles in the front of the leg that is stretched out behind you. You should feel a gentle stretch in those muscles. Do not bounce and keep your front knee over your foot.



### Increase Your Endurance by Walking for 20-minutes at Least 3 Times a Week

Walking outside can lift your spirits and be fun for your newborn, too. Take it slow at first and drink lots of water, as nursing mothers need plenty of fluids.

Walk standing straight with your abdominal muscles tight. Keep the stroller close to your body, so you are not leaning forward.



## Link Exercises Together in a Circuit Can Increase Your Endurance

Step-ups and dips will increase the endurance of your legs and arms.

### endurance exercise the step-up

- at first, use a low ledge
- face forward with one foot resting on the ledge
- step up until your leg is straight
- lower yourself down until your backfoot touches the ground



### endurance exercise the step-up

- a range of motion in an exercise is called a "rep"
- perform 10 to 15 reps for each leg
- a group of reps is called a "set"
- do 3 sets for each leg



If you string these exercises together, doing each one without resting between the sets, you are doing "circuit training." Circuit training will increase your overall endurance. A brisk walk to the park followed by a circuit of these exercises is a great endurance workout.

### endurance exercise lateral step-up

- turn sideways
- perform the same motion as a step-up
- this exercise requires more thigh strength than a regular step-up
- do 3 sets of 10-15 reps for each leg



### endurance exercise tricep dips

- place your hands shoulder width apart on the edge of the bench
- place your feet hip-width apart on the ground
- move your body off the bench



### endurance exercise tricep dips

- dip your arms to a 90 degree angle
- slowly press with your hands to lift yourself back to the starting position
- do 3 sets of 10 reps



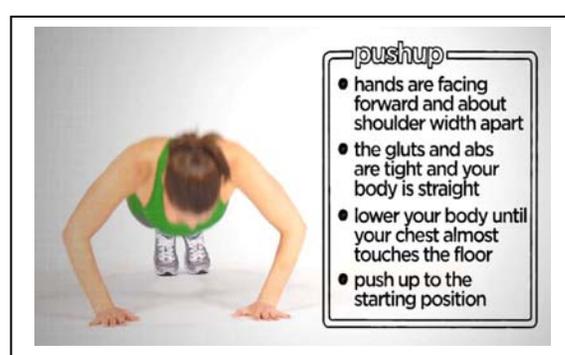
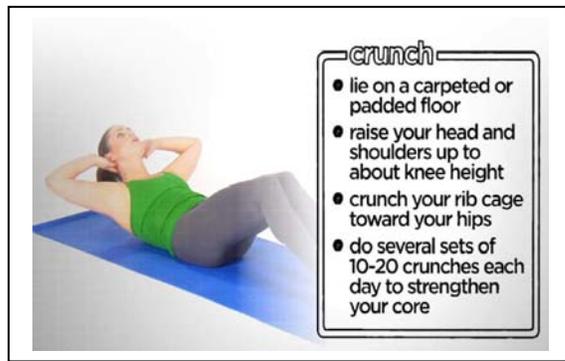
## Make It Easier to Do Tasks and Avoid Injury by Strength Training

Strengthening your upper body and abdominal muscles will make it easier to do tasks and help avoid injury. Start with light weights, but heavy enough that after 10 repetitions your muscles feel tired. As you get stronger, increase the weights. Always give your muscles a rest day after strength training. Try to do these exercises three days each week.

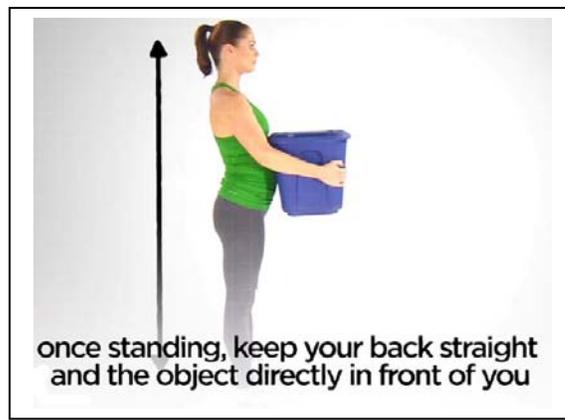
### shoulder press

- hold your arms out with your elbows bent to the side of your body and weights at shoulder height
- raise your arms overhead until your arms are straight keeping the weights aligned with your shoulders
- lower the weights slowly back to the starting position
- do three sets of ten reps





**Know How to Lift to Prevent Muscle Strains and Injuries**



Keep what you are lifting close to your center of gravity before raising the weight. When lowering your baby into a crib or car seat, keep your baby close to your body and then lower with your arms. Use the same process in reverse when lifting your baby.

When lifting a heavy object, get it close to your body. Keeping your back straight, lift with your legs and keep the object directly in front of you. The same movement is best for lifting your child.



**proper lifting technique**

- stand as close to the crib as possible
- hold your baby close to your body as you bend over the crib
- lower your baby down with your arms



**proper lifting technique**

- lift your baby with your arms
- draw your baby close to your chest
- lift your baby with your back



**Reduce your Stress Level with Breathing Exercises**

Like firefighting, motherhood can be a stressful job. When firefighters approach an emergency, they use a breathing technique called combat or tactical breathing to control the adrenaline in their system and reduce their stress level.

Take a deep breath through your nose for a count of four, then breathe out through your mouth for a slow count of four. After that, hold your breath for a count of four without breathing at all. Repeat this process four times.

**tactical breathing**

- take a deep breath through your nose for a count of four
- then breathe out through your mouth for a count of four
- hold your breath for a count of four without breathing at all
- repeat this process four times



Practicing this type of breathing exercise four times a day and use it when you feel your stress level increasing. You'll almost immediately feel calmer and be able to center your thoughts.



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