

Mommy & Me Pilates

By Alana Reed

Here are five Pilates maneuvers recommended for new mothers who need to decrease the burden on their back without missing any time with their new baby. These exercises are ideal for pre-crawlers. Remember: consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Quadra-Ped Balance: Get onto all fours with baby on her back and baby's feet directly between your hands. You should be looking at your baby's face. Extend one leg at a time into the air. Next try extending one arm at a time into the air. If this feels comfortable, extend opposite arm and leg at the same time. Repeat five times on each side. This strengthens gluteus, core and back.

Baby Crunch: Lie down on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Place baby sitting or lying on your thighs. Hold baby with both hands. Lift your head, neck and shoulders off the mat to play peek-a-boo. Repeat 15 times, three to five times a day. This strengthens abdominals.

Baby Pelvic Tilt: Start in the same position as the Baby Crunch. Hold onto your baby as you tilt your pelvis and bottom off the floor. Lower and repeat. Start with 15 repetitions a day and work your way up to 30. This strengthens gluteus,

lower stomach and hamstrings.
Clams: Lie down on your side with your knees bent in toward your chest. Place baby on his back in front of you. Lift your entire top leg. Tickle baby as you move. Repeat. Start with 15 repetitions and work up to 40. This strengthens gluteus, upper thigh and hip.

Stomach Scoop: As often as you can remember, scoop your stomach in. Think of pulling your navel toward your spine. This allows the stomach to support the back.

ALANA REED works with clients to strengthen core abdominal muscles — also known as the Powerhouse — for a flexible body, positive mind and strong spirit. She has a Master's degree from the Columbia University School of Social Work and was certified in the Pilates method by Romana Kryzanowska, one of five living protégés of Joseph Pilates. www.AlanaReedPilates.com.

