

## Prenatal Lesson 7 - Integrated Prenatal Assessments



# What's included:

- **Learn how to set up an initial fitness assessment**
- **Intake form questions**
- **Static and dynamic evaluations**
- **Postural distortions to observe**

## Steps in creating an effective exercise program design for the pregnant woman

1

1. Have client complete an intake form before first appointment ideally to give you time to review.

2

2. Look for possible high-risk red flags and ask for physician clearance before beginning exercise program.

3

3. Arrange for the client's first appointment where medical history will be reviewed and assessments can take place.

4

4. After all of these steps are completed exercise program design begins.

# Information In Client Intake Forms

- Personal information, name, age, etc
- Health history/injuries, former pregnancies, etc.
- Amendment to most intake forms will include detailed information about current pregnancy; due date, have client describe any potential symptoms that may indicate PFD
- Collect as much information as possible

# Sample Prenatal Intake Form

SAMPLE PRENATAL INTAKE FORM	
Client Identification: _____	
Are you pregnant, or planning on becoming pregnant soon?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am pregnant.	<i>Fabulous! When is your due date?</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am planning a pregnancy.	<i>Great! For when are you planning?</i> _____
Is this, or will this be, your first pregnancy? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have you had a miscarriage before? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I've had _____ miscarriages	
If you have previously given birth, please indicate the type(s) of birth you had, and list any children (i.e., how many; ages or DOB), and any complications (e.g., tearing, episiotomy):	
<input type="checkbox"/> C-section If checked, how many? _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Vaginal If checked, how many? _____
_____	
_____	
List and describe any exercise or physical/recreational activities performed during and after any previous pregnancies and childbirths:	
_____	
_____	
List and describe all exercise, sport, or physical/recreational activities currently being performed:	
_____	
_____	
Please describe your current lifestyle habits. For example, are you active during the day, or do you mostly sit? What are your eating habits like? What are your sleeping habits like?	
_____	
_____	
_____	
Have you experienced any emotional struggles (e.g., depression, anxiety) recently?	
_____	
_____	
_____	

SAMPLE PRENATAL INTAKE FORM		
Client Identification: _____		
Please check the box of any of the following symptoms you've experience:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Anemia	<input type="checkbox"/> Heart Disease	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding unexplained	<input type="checkbox"/> Hemorrhoids/varicose veins	
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpal Tunnel	<input type="checkbox"/> High/Low BP	
<input type="checkbox"/> Diastasis Recti	<input type="checkbox"/> Incontinence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Digestive issues (i.e., reflux, constipation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gestational Diabetes		
Please explain in more detail any of the items that were checked above: _____		
_____		
_____		
Check all areas below in which you are experiencing pain, stiffness, numbness, or inflammation:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Back	<input type="checkbox"/> Elbow	<input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder
<input type="checkbox"/> Glutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Thumb	<input type="checkbox"/> Neck
<input type="checkbox"/> Legs (e.g., Sciatica)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pelvis	<input type="checkbox"/> Wrist
Please explain in more detail any items that were checked above: _____		
_____		
_____		
Please describe any other information that you think would be beneficial: _____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
THANK YOU		

# Fitness Assessments

The intention of the initial appointment or consultation is to observe and listen to the client. Some information may come out that was not on the intake form, listening to clients likes and dislikes, comfort levels and observing her form and technique are crucial before any exercise design can occur. The first appointments should include;

1. Observe woman's posture both statically and dynamically
2. Teach her the ABC's
3. Have her complete 5 essential movements to further evaluate where dysfunction and strengths are in her body and what kinds of movements seem challenging
4. Based on essential movements, begin to use other tests like putting movements together repetitively to test endurance and function with multi-planer, and multi-body parts moving in sequence
5. Use this information to begin to design future workouts and create an exercise program for this client

- Posture is ever-changing as a woman's pregnancy progresses. It is important to note that pain and injury in conjunction with pregnancy will create compensation and dysfunction.
- Helping to create body awareness will help the client make adjustments necessary to complete movements safely and without compromising proper technique.

# Posture During Pregnancy



Three common posture distortions during pregnancy and the effect on the neuromuscular core system

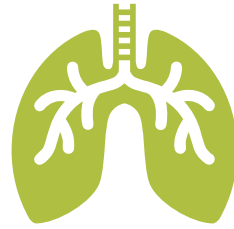
- Kyphosis or “rounding of upper back”
- Exaggerated Anterior Tilt of pelvis
- Externally rotated femur and pronated feet



# The "ABC's"



**Alignment**



**Breathe**

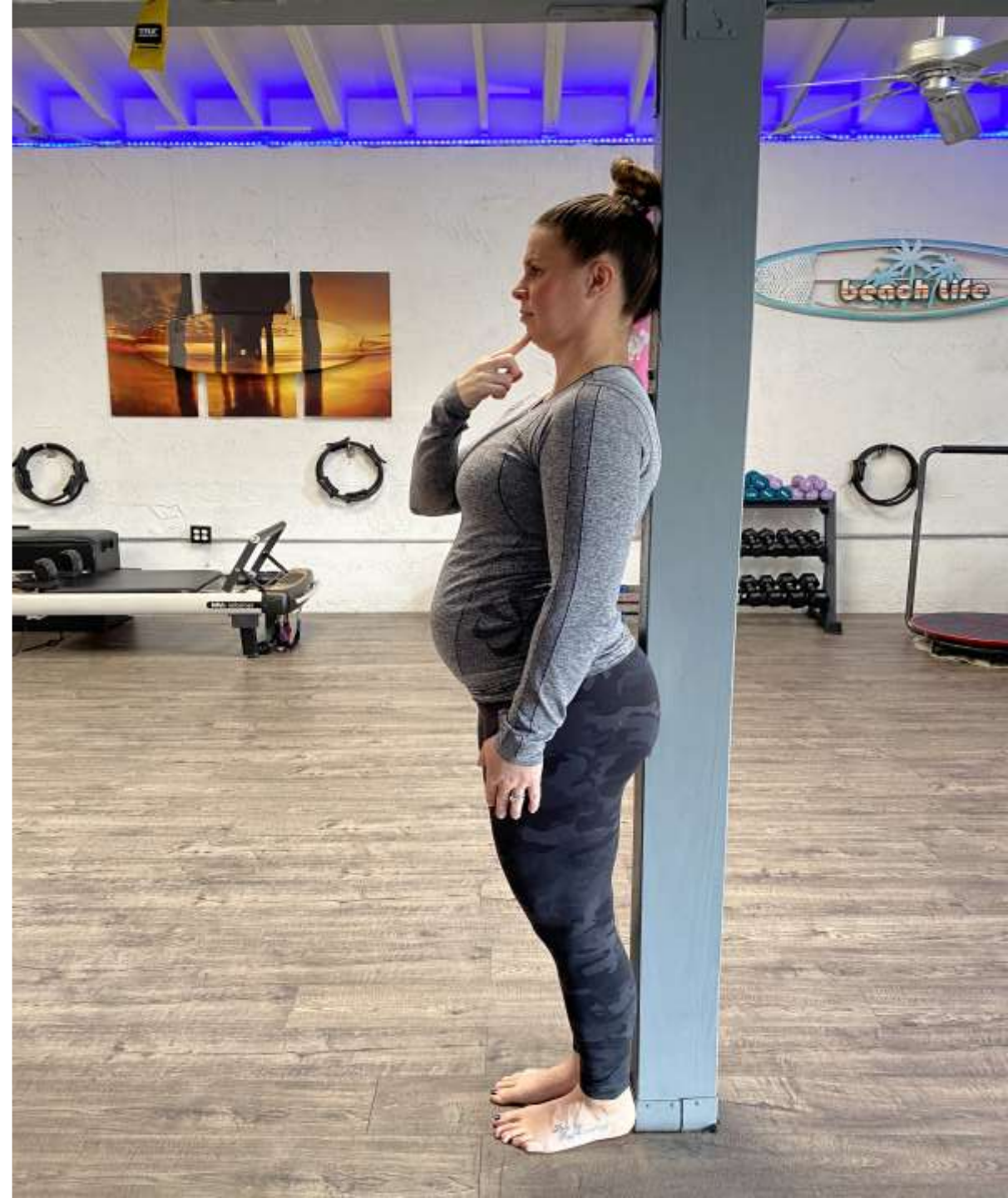


**Core  
Control**

# Alignment

- As discussed, many women have poor posture due to their ever-changing body. The pregnant body is especially prone to “bad posture” habits in the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester. Other factors like former injuries, compensation and lifestyle may contribute to worsening form.
- “Alignment” refers to how the head, shoulders, spine, hips, knees and ankles relate and “line up” with one another.
- Demonstrate by example what “good form” should look from standing, to kneeling to sitting. Even address lying for comfort issues.
- Have your client practice aligning her body during the warm-up and before executing the actual exercise. For example, have her standing flush against a wall with back of head against the wall, back of shoulders, rear end and heels. Then ask her to keep the form and move away from the wall.
- Adjust the six points HSSHKA as needed considering starting foot positioning and stance

🔗 Helping her assess  
her alignment



# Effect of better alignment and more efficient breathing and movement

- Adjusting and learning proper alignment prior to beginning exercise is crucial in improving core to pelvic floor strength, improving breathing, circulation and avoiding PFD issues created by too much intra-abdominal tension
- Teaching the right kind of TVA (transverse abdominus) tension and strength will enhance posture
- Directing clients on non-exercise movements to improve their posture and function is important, for example teaching how to move from lying to sitting without creating additional stress on the abdominal muscles
- Part of enhancing posture includes avoiding sitting or standing in one position for too long to avoid fatigue which essentially may lead to improper alignment
- Advising clients to “recover” and rest between workouts and practicing good nutrition to the muscles may also improve alignment
- Practice balancing movements to improve unilateral strength.

# Breath

- Definition of Diaphragmatic Breath:  
“a type of breathing exercise that patients are taught to promote more effective aeration of the lungs, consisting of moving the diaphragm downward during inhalation and upward with exhalation.” <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/diaphragmatic+breathing>
- The benefit of DB is to strengthen the entire neuromuscular core system which consists of the diaphragm, transverse abdominus and multiple pelvic floor muscles
- The inhalation promotes a “relaxed or rest state”
- The exhalation promotes the “active state” from pelvis to upper rib cage, involving the torso

## Core Control

- **Core** stability refers to a person's ability to stabilize their **core**. Stability, in this context, should be considered as an ability to **control** the position and movement of the **core**.
- Learning Core stability helps avoid injury and creates more strength of the core stabilizers, important to pregnancy and delivery

# ABC steps of proper breath with core integration

- Teach Diaphragmatic Breath work lying on back and then standing
- Use imagery to guide client through internal contractions of the vaginal muscles. Teach her to hold and squeeze on the “exhale” and releasing and relaxing pelvic floor muscles on the “inhale”. For this step I explain lifting from the pelvic floor like an elevator or “zipping up tight jeans”.
- Incorporate DB with internal contractions and add isometric Transverse abdominal engagement for the complete core integration
- When steps 1-3 are mastered functional movement may begin in the most basic position and stance and progress into more difficult starting positions, multiple planes of motion added, bi-lateral and unilateral movement, and added environmental stimuli









Example of the “ABCs” together

# Progression in movement patterns

```
graph LR; A[Progression in movement patterns] --> B[Once alignment and breathe work is practiced, then the practical application of "control" can begin.]; B --> C[The essential movements can be performed using the ABC principals]; B --> D[Tempo, repetitions, intensity are all considerations in observing this phase]; C --> E[The trifecta of the ABC's come together for optimal performance]; D --> E;
```

Once alignment and breathe work is practiced, then the practical application of "control" can begin.

The essential movements can be performed using the ABC principals

Tempo, repetitions, intensity are all considerations in observing this phase

The trifecta of the ABC's come together for optimal performance

Five essential  
exercise to  
observe and  
implement  
during  
pregnancy



- **Bending**
- **Reaching**
- **Lunging**
- **Rotation**
- **Squatting**



Bending (i.e., Sagittal plane)



Reaching (i.e., Frontal plane)



Lunging (i.e., Sagittal plane)



Rotation (i.e., Frontal plane)





Squatting (i.e., Transverse plane)



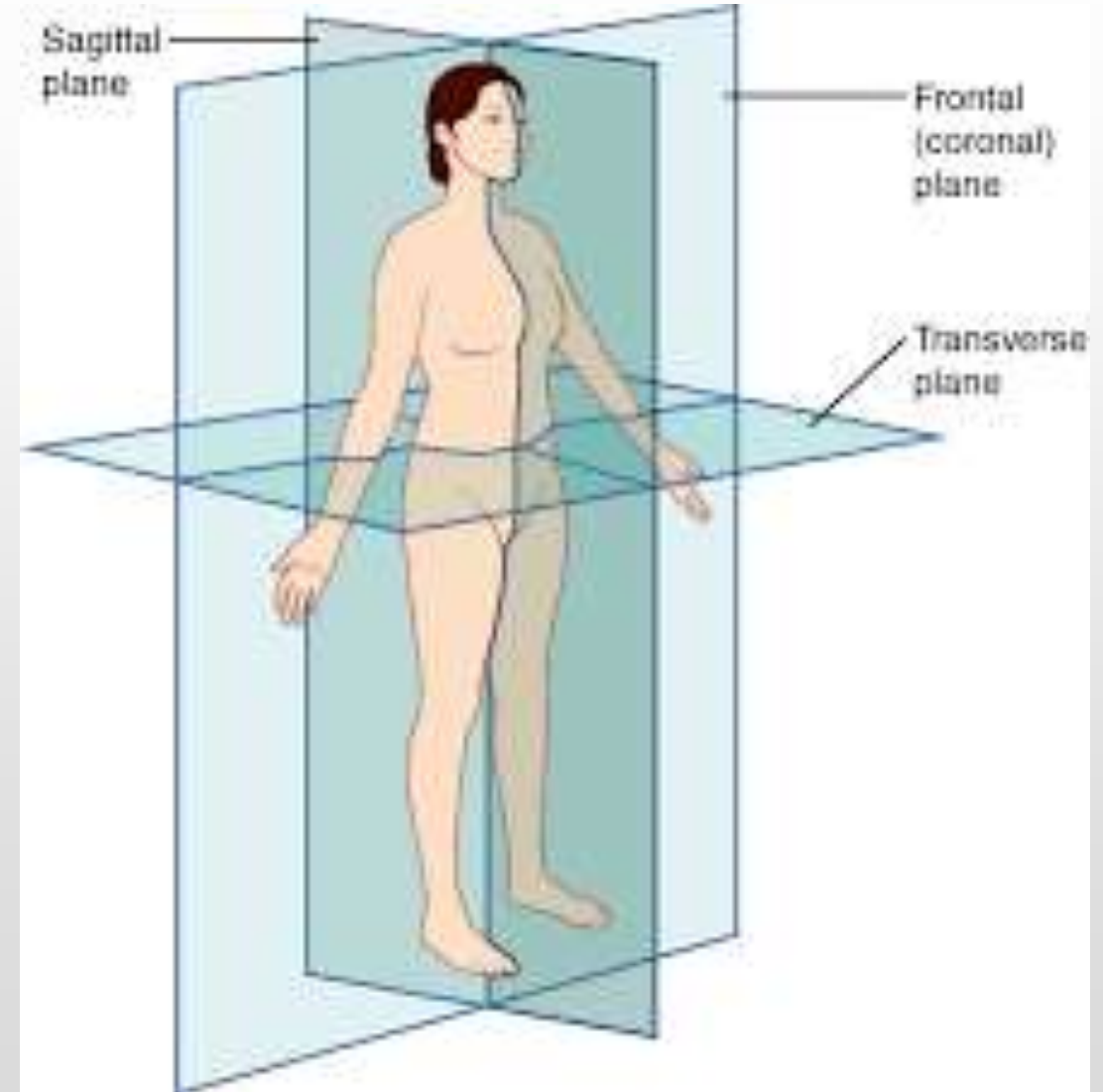
# Factors that help progression and regression of exercises



- **Foot placement**
- **Stance**
- **Plane of motion while executing movement**
- **Multi-body movement**

# Planes of motion

- ▶ Life happens in a variety of planes of motion and it is important to practice these essential movements within these planes of motion
- ▶ The three planes of motion include:
  - ▶ The Sagittal Plane: anatomical boundary that exists between the left and right sides of the body
  - ▶ The Frontal Plane: Divides the body into front and back sides
  - ▶ The Transverse Plane: divides the body horizontally into upper and lower body parts



# Summary of creating exercise program for prenatal client in all trimesters

