

# Safe & Effective Measures to Create a Medical Fitness Business for the Prenatal & Postpartum client

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# Objectives of this Presentation

Define

Define & introduce the prenatal and postpartum phases and client base

Learn

Learn more about common dysfunction and obstacles within this population

Understand

Understand why this is a desirable population and transform your business

# Introduction

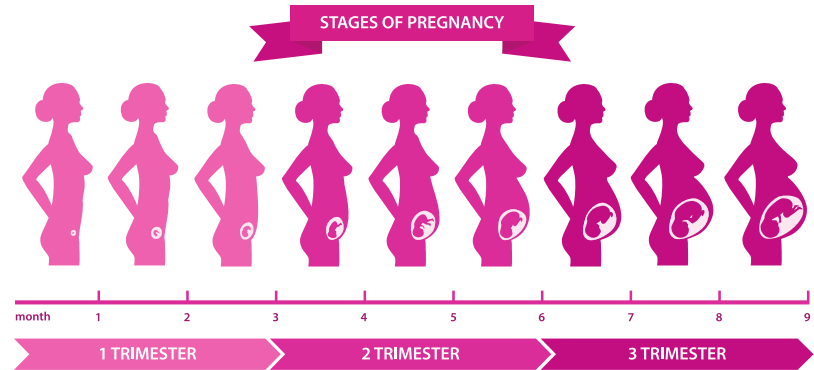
# Pregnancy

Definition, timeline and risk factors



# Pregnancy Defined

- The period from conception to birth.
- Divided into three trimesters:
  - \*First Trimester weeks 1-12
  - \*Second Trimester weeks 13-27
  - \*Third Trimester weeks 28-40



# What's Happening

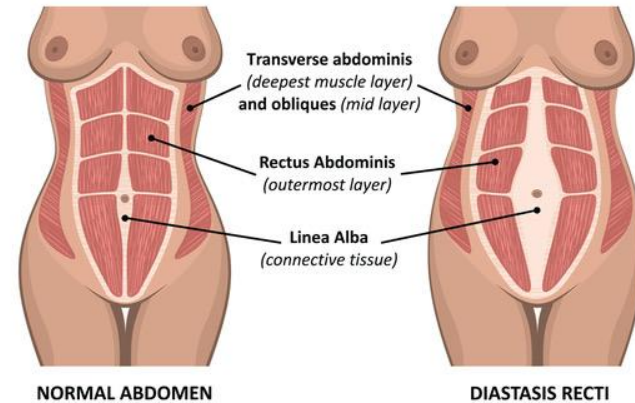
- The ever-changing pregnant body carries it's share of specific pregnancy induced symptoms.
- Risk factors may exist during pregnancy including;
  - pre-existing medical conditions, maternal age, multiple gestation.
- Hormonal changes are occurring during pregnancy at a dramatic rate with elevated levels of Progesterone, Estrogen and Relaxin which affect joints and connective tissue.
- Common postural distortions arise from increased weight gain as the pregnancy develops placing more stress on the entire body.

# COMMON INJURIES & DYSFUNCTION

(during Pregnancy)

- Pelvic Floor Dysfunction conditions may develop, particularly in the third trimester due to growth of pregnancy, inactivity or improper activity, lifestyle and genetics.
- Pregnant women are more prone to tissue injuries with reduced equilibrium and increased release of Progesterone and Relaxin.
- Pregnancy induced symptoms such as nausea, constipation and hemorrhoids may be reduced through exercise.

## DIASTASIS RECTI





# IMPROVE HER PERFORMANCE

During pregnancy

- Exercise during pregnancy has a list of known benefits to mother including reduction of many pregnancy induced ailments like morning sickness, orthopedic discomfort, pelvic floor dysfunction, decreased stress, increased energy and positive mood.
- Exercise during pregnancy may also have cognitive developmental benefits to unborn child.
- Exercise during pregnancy may improve the chances of a vaginal birth.
- Exercise during pregnancy may expediate recovery from childbirth.



# Exercise Program Design for the Pregnant Woman

- Teaching the “ABC’s”
- Functional movement exercises
- Workouts that incorporate strength training and cardio-respiratory are ideal
- Consideration of postural distortions is necessary when designing exercise programs for a pregnant client
- A variety of equipment and formats may be used for pregnant clients including suspension straps, barre, pilates reformers, and free weights
- Avoid impact movements or movements that create “intra-abdominal tension”

# POSTPARTUM

Definition, timeline, risk factors

# Postpartum Defined



There are 3 distinct postpartum phases that begin hours after delivery (acute) until usually around 6 weeks after birth (subacute) and then (delayed) postpartum affects continue up to 12 months after delivery.

# COMMON INJURIES

Common dysfunction during postpartum

# Pelvic Floor Dysfunction & More

- Pelvic Floor Dysfunction conditions may continue and possibly get worse from child-birth into postpartum phase
  - A variety of risk factors affect the bodies recovery process postpartum like activity level, nutrition, sleep, stress, support, lactation, pre-existing orthopedic injuries
  - Women who are more prone to pelvic floor dysfunction may include: hypermobility, type of delivery, improper form or technique
- Non-pelvic floor related injuries include;
  - ACL injuries, Plantar Facitis, Carpel Tunnel, and De Quervains



# IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

During Postpartum





- As with the prenatal woman, special considerations must be made for the postpartum female
- Birth should be compared to any other injury or surgery and treated as such with a recovery plan in place that includes pelvic floor physical therapy and proper exercise programming
- The connective tissue is still very compromised during the postpartum phase for the first 3 months (4<sup>th</sup> trimester) and potentially longer if nursing
- Lasting psychological affects of exercise during postpartum phase is known to reduce postpartum depression

# Who are the Prenatal & Postpartum Clientele?



# Statistics of Prenatal & Postpartum women in U.S. (source CDC.gov)

Average age 27 (higher in other countries)

Higher education

Breadwinner & working through pregnancy

Unmarried (almost 50%)

Millennial generation (1981-1994)

# More Information About First Time Moms..

- According to CDC there are approximately 4 million births each year in the USA
- The demand for better medical birth practices, female healthcare and maternity leave are hot topics right now
- Other first world countries, France, Germany, Canada are providing physiotherapy and support to new mothers

# What does the Prenatal and Postpartum Woman Want/Need From a Fitness Program?

- Safe & effective exercise programming
- Tools for an easier pregnancy
- Preparation for birth
- Faster postpartum recovery
- Support
- Community
- Welcoming and comfortable environment

# TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

During and after pregnancy

# Why is this a desirable population to assist?



- Large network
- Longevity of this client base
- Professional satisfaction in helping this client base through a milestone in her life

# Steps to Developing Your Prenatal & Postpartum Medical-Fitness Business

## Educate

Learn about pregnancy & Postpartum

## Collaborate

- \*Meet woman's health PT's
- \*Find local mom's group
- \*Introduce yourself to OBGYN's/hospitals and birthing centers

## Facilitate

Create a nurturing, supportive environment



# Educate Yourself as the Professional



01

## Learn

- Learn the anatomy and physiology of pregnancy, types of childbirth and the affects pregnancy and childbirth have on all the body systems

02

## Read

- Read the ACOG exercise guidelines and familiarize yourself with the most updated exercise guidelines

03

## Research

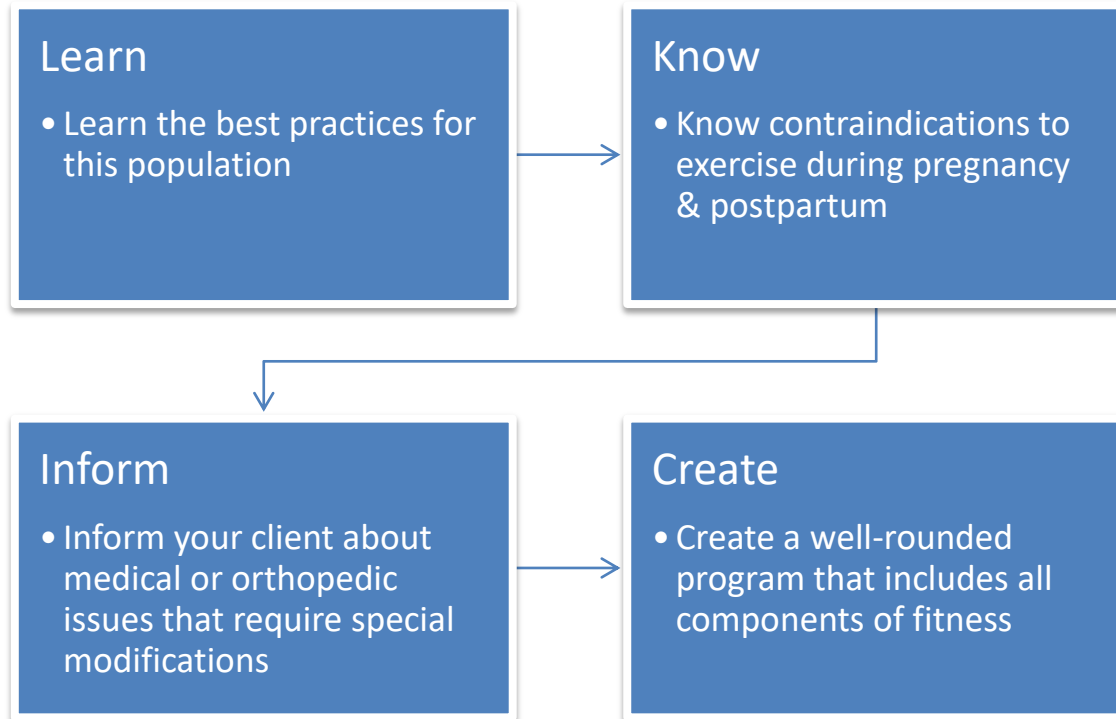
- Research scholarly articles on the topic of prenatal and postpartum exercise

04

## Speak

- Speak with other professionals who have worked with pregnant women and new mothers

# Best Practices for Exercise Design for the Prenatal & Postpartum Female



# Collaborate and Create Your Network

- Create relationships with woman health physical therapists, chiropractors, and healthcare practitioners that can serve as referral network and team to treat the client
- Reach out and find local mom and parenting groups and ask to speak to them about importance of fitness
- Speak with OBGYN's to also make sure they know your business and how it can help their patients



# Facilitate a Welcoming & Supportive Environment



- A clean, warm environment is ideal
- Decide if you will welcome babies or children and make sure it is baby proofed
- Have a place for nursing or changing baby
- Think about parking, transporting their little one, etc
- Create a supportive community environment with other women “mom tribe”

# Think Big as a Prenatal & Postpartum Fitness Specialist

Teacher	Begin your journey as an instructor within a studio, PT clinic or otherwise
Creator	Design your own curriculum and program
Owner	Establish your own business or brick and mortar studio and bring your program in

# OPTIMIZE CLIENT ASSESSMENTS

During & after pregnancy



- Intake forms will need to have more detailed information included and ask the “right questions”
- Assessments should include various tasks including dynamic movement as well as static postural observation
- Considerations of maternal position changes as pregnancy progresses
- Communication with pregnant client of any pregnancy induced symptoms and discomforts



- Observing the postpartum female both in dynamic movement and statically is essential to assess postural deviations and limitations
  
- Use the essential movement patterns to help determine these factors:
  - Bending
  - Reaching
  - Rotation
  - Squatting
  - Lunging



# Why is Fitness so Critical and Unique During and After Pregnancy?



- Research shows the immediate and long-term benefits of exercise during and after pregnancy
- Prenatal and postpartum women are recognized as an underserved/untapped market in medical fitness industries from lack of professionals providing safe & effective exercise programming or lack of resources for professionals to learn from
- Such a milestone in a woman's life that will affect her body forever and the "right" kind treatment (exercise) is critical

# A Little bit About Me..

- B.S in Kinesiology from UNT 1995
- Attended graduate school in Exercise Physiology emphasis in prenatal exercise
- Master prenatal/postpartum private trainer SCLA 1998-2002
- Wrote prenatal fitness con-ed program for NASM 2003
- Taught “mommy/baby aerobics” for the Beach Cities Health District 2002-2008
- Created “Momfit” classes 2003
- Began “Bionic Mommy program” 2015
- Started “Core Mom” LLC (Corrective Obstetrical Related Exercise) 2017
- Medfit education advisory board member/speaker 2018
- Wrote “Modern Approach to exercise during pregnancy” through FLS 2019
- Wrote “Prenatal and Postpartum exercise programming” for the full Medfit Women’s course 2020
- Mother of 3 amazing children (18,15, 12)
- Follow me @coremomfitness on Facebook and Instagram for more ideas



# Conclusion

- There is a shift happening now in the fitness industry and staying relevant and catering to special populations broadens your offerings as a medical fitness professional. The female population, specifically pregnant women and new mothers are in dire need of compassionate, knowledgeable fitness programming and those who can provide this are in an elevated position. Many opportunities exist with this population.

# Resources for you to learn more...

- “The Woman’s Health & Fitness Specialist” course through Medfit Education
- [www.ACOG.org](http://www.ACOG.org)
- “A modern approach to exercise during pregnancy” Fitness Learning Systems
- Female Chain reaction course through the Gray Institute
- [www.coremomfitness.com](http://www.coremomfitness.com)