

The Importance of a Postnatal Recovery Roadmap

Postnatal recovery expert and founder of The Mummy MOT, Maria Elliott, gives a step by step run-down of what to expect and plan for



**The information below is not intended as medical advice and is only intended to offer points you may wish to consider in 'non-emergency situations', together with signposting for more support. You should consult an appropriate medical professional if you have concerns about yourself or someone you know.*

Many mums-to-be spend a significant amount of time and effort on a birth plan but few spend as much energy on their postnatal recovery roadmap - which is equally, if not more, important - to ensure you are looking after yourself mentally, physically and structurally. Here's an outline suggestion to take away and make your own.

Birth - Two Weeks

Stay cocooned in your baby bubble with just you, your baby and your partner and/or closest support. Take it easy, nourish yourself by eating well and resting, reconnect with your breathing and pelvic floor as your uterus goes down.

Consider who is going to be around to help look after you. Can you get support from a partner, parent, doula, friends or neighbours? Can someone or you prepare food before the birth and freeze it, so you have easily accessible nourishing and healthy meals?

Two - Six Weeks

Much as you may feel either the urge or the pressure to 'get back to normal', try to remember that the recovery process takes time and this period should still be focused on resting, recovering, and letting your bladder and bowel get back to normal.

If you feel up to it, you can begin introducing gentle functional movement and postnatal pilates. Depending on your situation, this may include positions like tilts and bridges to regain more functioning

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movement but it's not advisable to start any hardcore strengthening until you have had your six-week check.

Six - Eight Weeks

This may be done by your GP who should screen you for a tummy gap, check your pelvic floor, and any scarring or tearing. The Mummy MOT also has a network of professional specialist physios throughout the UK and Ireland who can offer online checks as well as clinic appointments.

Start a specialist Pilates recovery programme. The Mummy MOT offers Smart Pilates, which features different exercises depending on your situation, for example, if you are suffering from incontinence or prolapse.

12 Weeks

By this time, you shouldn't have any pain or have overwhelming feelings of anger, frustration, or sadness. If there is still pain or high emotions, anxiety or you're still traumatised, it makes it harder for your body to strengthen its muscles and regain your core strength. If there is any persisting pain or trauma you should seek treatment.

20 Weeks

At this point, your bladder, bowel, and intimacy should be back to 'normal' and feel 'normal' again. If you are leaking, have pelvic or vaginal pain, or have not had sex because you are scared of intimacy or it hurts when you do, then you should seek professional help from your GP or postnatal recovery specialist.