

POST-NATAL CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name

Phone Number

Email

What type of birth did you have?

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Have you been checked by your doctor yet?

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Did you have any complications such as pelvic floor issues or abdominal separation?

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Have you experienced any pain since you gave birth, and if so, has the pain progressed?

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Have you found anything unexpectedly difficult to do?

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Have you been able to move around without any problems? How have you been with carrying your baby around, picking them up off the floor, etc?

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What exercise have you done so far, and how has your body responded?

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How many children have you had?

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Were you suffering from any pain or injuries before you were pregnant?

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Did you have any other injuries or problems during your pregnancy?

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QUESTIONNAIRE IMPLICATIONS

The following questions will provide enough information to start building a program - what exercises to do or focus on, and also the exercises which need to be avoided. Indications regarding prognosis and the possible rate of physical improvement are another priority of asking these screening questions.

What type of birth did you have?

Caesarean births require the surgical cutting/separating of the abdominal muscles during the birthing procedure. This makes the muscles around the trunk even weaker than normal, so care must be taken when progressing exercises that may put too much stress on the abs. In most cases, women will be able to resume exercises 4-6 weeks post-birth. A caesarean birth will be more likely to push exercise back to 6 weeks post birth or later.

Have you been checked by your doctor yet?

Although this sounds trivial, some mothers may not ask their doctor when it is safe to return to Pilates. Be aware that sometimes when a client has been directed not to exercise, this could mean types of exercise like running or heavy resistance training. Pilates can be started much earlier in the recovery period in comparison to general physical training.

Did you have any complications such as pelvic floor issues or abdominal separation?

Vaginal tearing or other musculoskeletal issues can occur during birth. This will limit the speed of progression, and care needs to be taken so that the complications are not made any worse. Ask the mother if there have been any restrictions placed by their treating doctor.

Have you experienced any pain since you gave birth, and if so, has the pain progressed?

Back, hip, pubic bone, shoulder and neck pain are all common ailments following not only the birth, but also the proceeding nursing involved with taking care of a newborn. Ask about any injuries, but also how they have developed. Is the pain getting worse or better, and is she seeing anyone for treatment of these problems? Someone who is improving over the weeks will not need to tread so carefully with exercise intensity as opposed to another who is battling every day with pain.

Have you found anything unexpectedly difficult to do?

Sometimes it is better to indirectly gather information about injuries by asking what functional activities have been difficult. Clients may not complain of their back being sore but will immediately tell a story about having a hard time standing up from a chair due to pain.

Mobility questions – Have you been able to move around without any problems? How have you been with carrying your baby around, picking them up off the floor, etc?

These questions can gauge current physical endurance/stamina and movement issues.

What exercise have you done so far, and how has your body responded?

This is a great question as you will have direct data on what level of intensity and types of movements your client has been exposed to. For example, if a client has tried to go for a light jog and within 5 minutes developed some hip pain, exercise focus should be on the hip abductors and extensors. There are some other questions not related to the birth, or post-birth that can be useful. These attend to previous history, and during pregnancy - quite important if the client is unknown to you.

How many children have you had?

It can be harder to recover from several pregnancies as opposed to just one. The mother's age during the previous pregnancies can provide further information regarding recovery. Although health care is continually improving, the younger female will generally cope with the physical adaptations of pregnancy much better than someone who is significantly older.

Were you suffering from any pain or injuries before you were pregnant?

Pregnancy will not magically heal or fix any previous injuries and sometimes they will gradually worsen. Avoid exercises that will further exacerbate any existing comorbidities.

Did you have any injuries or problems during your pregnancy?

Any pain that developed during pregnancy will more than likely still be present, possibly to a lesser extent. It will be important to know if there are any movements or positions that may be dangerous.