



PREPARING for BABY number 2

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It happens before you know it. First you are in the throws of life with a newborn, marvelling at this wonderful new addition in your life yet wondering how any adult can possibly function on so little sleep. Then, with complete disregard for any of the discomfort experienced through pregnancy or birth, thoughts meander towards baby number two.

Many factors influence any decisions about when to try for another baby. Some I have been told by fellow parents include: waiting until the first born is considered of an age to assist with the new baby (average age being 3 years), wanting to have their family close together, financial considerations, wanting to feel back in control of their life (good luck with that one!). The common denominator was a combination of emotional, financial and physical (including “body clock”) resources, most importantly on mum.

My wife and I had discussed timeframes for our family even during the pregnancy of our first

child. This did vary according to how she was feeling, from “never” to wanting to conceive before her 35th birthday. As I don’t have the physical capacity for either pregnancy or birth, it has been largely determined by my wife. Our key factors were: before age 35 to reduce risk of complications but also to ensure we are young enough to “play” with our children and still have a life when they leave the nest at the other end. We also wanted time for Angela’s body to have a break from breastfeeding to rebuild and prepare for number two. This break is only a matter of months due to the other factors.

The parents I know as family, friends and clients, all expressed similar concerns on behalf of or as the mums – “...my muscle tone has disappeared after the first” (baby), “I have saggy bits which I can no longer hide”, “...I try to eat properly but...” (comfort food), “I want to exercise but I just feel tired or it’s difficult finding the time”. Pregnancy and motherhood is like the ultimate marathon, a personal

contest of sprints interspersed with the test of strength and sheer determination.

With the belief that a healthy body goes hand in hand with a healthy mind and soul, and our plans along with friends, to prepare for baby number two, this article will focus on rebuilding the body. Although with Mums in mind, Dads benefit too!

Toning muscles in your upper and lower body is a great way to stay strong for childbirth, also for whatever parenthood has in store for you. Why is the lower body so important? Lower body strength is required for carrying the increased weight of pregnancy efficiently, reducing stress on joints, particularly assisting to maintain a level of stability for the pelvis when it begins to move in preparation for the birth process.

Lower body exercise also promotes efficient circulation, which may help alleviate the development of varicose veins. With exercise, you may experience less of the

“pregnancy waddle”. Any exercise done properly will assist the birthing process and recovery – some exercise is better than no exercise (refer to my article “Exercise for Pregnancy” – Kiwi Parent, issues 210 & 211).

Fitness centres are common now, and with this in mind I've devised a programme to help Mums (and Dads) to rebuild your body and get back in to shape. As long as you have no underlying joint injuries or other complications from your first pregnancy (this requires a more individualised programme), this programme will benefit you! Because of the number of requests for specific gym-based exercises,

this one is for the gym. Next issue I will incorporate a home-based circuit training programme.

Circuit Training

This has become increasingly popular with women as it provides a one stop total body exercise session, combining strength and aerobic training into a time-efficient workout. It is one of the most versatile methods of exercise and reduces both body weight and inches. As an excellent all round provider of fitness – lean muscle tone, increased strength and aerobic endurance – the benefits of circuit training are “maximum results in minimum time”.

Key Features of Circuit Training

- ◆ **CIRCUIT TRAINING** is flexible. If challenged for time you can achieve a complete body workout in just 10 minutes. More challenging workouts require more time – approx. 45 minutes. Also, circuits can be done up to four times per week.
- ◆ **WHATEVER** your level of fitness, you can work at a pace that is comfortable for you.
- ◆ **CIRCUITS** involve moving from one machine/exercise to the next as quickly as is comfortable though trying to maintain your heart rate at 85% intensity or approximately 135–148 beats per minute. The quick movement between machines/exercises sustains the fat burning.
- ◆ **CIRCUIT** training enables variety, making it challenging and psychologically rewarding.
- ◆ **MOST IMPORTANT** – circuit training can be done at home or at the gym.

KEY Points to Remember

- ◆ **WEIGHTS** are an estimate only:
 - alter to suit your ability
 - weights will be lighter than for straight strength training.
- ◆ **ALL MOVEMENTS** need to be smooth and controlled.
- ◆ **SPEEDS** may vary on the cardio machines from gym to gym.



Example CIRCUIT Training PROGRAMME



Warm-up 3-5mins

Pulldowns 20 reps (21kg) – hands in line with your shoulders and only down as far as your chin

Bench press (DB: dumb bells) 20 reps (5kg) – arms at right angles

X-trainer 3-5mins (level 10/90RPM)

Clean & Press (DB) 20 reps (4kg) – keep head up, half squat legs with arms extended

Seated Rows 20 reps (21kg)

$\frac{1}{2}$ **Squats** (DB) 20 reps (5kg) – head up, back straight

Walk Lunges (DB) 20 steps and return – ensure stepping out in line with your shoulders

Rowing 3mins split so 45sec fast then 15 slow – approx. 35 strokes per min then 25 per min

Pec Deck 20 reps (24kg)

Leg Press 20 reps (40 kg)

Punches (DB)

$\frac{1}{2}$ **Front Raises** (DB) 20 reps each x2 (2kg)

Treadmill 3mins Speed: 8–11; Grade: 3–5

Side Step Ups (DB) 15 each leg – keep one foot on the bench at all times

Bench Tucks 20 reps

Stepper 2mins (toes on end)

Standing Alternate Curls (DB) 15 (4kg)

Tri-Kickbacks (DB) 15 each side (4kg)

Bike 3mins – split 30secs fast (90rpm at level 5) 30secs moderate (70rpm at level 3)

Leg Curls 20 reps (24kg)

Squats

Jump Lunges 20 reps bodyweight only – HANDS on HIPS

Jump Squats

X-Trainer 3-5mins level 10 90rpm

Hyper-extension 15 slow (5kg) – no higher than legs

Crunches 40

Side Crunches 40 repeat x 2 (head & shoulders off floor)

High Reverse Crunches 40 (back and buttocks on floor – short pulsing with feet toward ceiling)



Keep your comments or queries coming in to mike@befit.co.nz
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