

farnhampilates

How good nutrition can help your body to close The Diastasis Recti Gap

How food can affect your healing

A poor diet that's heavy on hydrogenated fats, additives, sugar, caffeine and alcohol saps energy, creates fat, our skin and hair looks lank, it may make joints ache and affect your moods, we can experience anxiety, bad sleep and poor concentration. So these foods like sugar, alcohol, caffeine, processed foods and trans fats are inflammatory foods creating abdominal swelling and preventing you from recovering.

Good nutrition like vitamins, minerals and essential fats are nourishing and crucial to our health and wellbeing. So when unwell, ill or healing nutrition helps the body's repair processes especially after an operation, injury, healing us and keeping our immune system strong. This also includes during and after pregnancy and childbirth as its essential to keep muscles strong to support the baby and then after to heal a tear, C-section scar or diastasis recti.

Healing foods

Specifically increase you intake of Vitamins C and A, and zinc, protein, oxygen breathing properly and deeply, water and Alpha-linolenic acid (essential fatty acids). Vitamins C and A, and zinc, are important for collagen regeneration, and helping these fibres to become taut. **Find Vitamin C in a host of fresh fruit and vegetables, such as red peppers, tomatoes and kiwis. Boost Vitamin A by eating carrots, sweet potatoes and kale. Get zinc from nuts, seeds and beans.** Protein, which is a component of every cell in the body, also plays a big role in repairing damaged tissue. Include good protein with every meal. **My favourite sources of protein are: grass-fed or organic meat, fish, nuts and eggs.** Oxygen and breathing properly from your diaphragm (not your belly) is vital – and iron is the 'taxi service' that takes oxygen to the body cells to function at an optimum level and heal. **Eat iron-rich foods like beef, broccoli and apricots to make sure you're getting enough.** Water is crucial for detoxifying and hydrating connective tissue, and for boosting circulation – including plain water, diluted juices, herbal teas and water-rich foods count too). Alpha-linolenic acid (essential fatty acids) is another important component of your healing diet. It improves the body's absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, has a positive effect on immune response, and boosts energy. **So eat plenty of oily fish, seeds, nuts, avocados and eggs. And use olive oil, coconut oil, rapeseed oil and hemp oil liberally as you prepare meals.**

How is the diastasis recti healed?

Diastasis recti is a symptom of excessive intra abdominal pressure – pressure that particularly rises in the abdominal cavity in pregnancy and fails to drop to a normal level after giving birth (see the infographic below). This pressure causes the connective tissue (collagen fibres) of the rectus abdominis muscle or linea alba to be stretched and thinned to make way for your growing baby and doesn't spring back afterwards, as there may still be pressure. Nutrition needs to assist collagen production for the linea alba collagen fibres to regain elasticity, enabling 'the gap' to narrow and the midline to firm up.

Emotional stress is bad for your diastasis recti too

Being a mother is hard enough, but being a calm mother is a challenge but if you are tired, stressed out, anxious, or angry, your body is distracted, sapped of energy and unable to focus on healing. So try to find ways to rest and relax every day.

Mindful ways to heal

Exercise mindfully (aware of your body's limitations), gain strength slowly and eat well so your body will return back to full fitness, inside and out.

DIASTASIS RECTI 101

AKA 'The Gap' AKA Abdominal Separation

WHAT IS IT?

Abdominal muscle connective tissues stretch + weaken at the mid-line

Left + right sides of abs look + feel 'separated'

IT'S COMMON



2 out of 3 mums

have it after 2+ babies

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS INSIDE...



BEFORE+AFTER

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Excessive intra-abdominal pressure

Poor alignment + the wrong ab exercises make the problem worse

Pressure rocketed in pregnancy & hasn't normalised



YOUR BODY CLUES...

- ✓ Mummy tummy
- ✓ Lower back pain
- ✓ Pelvic floor not doing its job!

1. Lie on back, knees bent, feet flat



2. Fingers above belly button



3. Press down with fingertips

4. Lift head, neck, shoulders



5. Your muscles will close in... how many fingers-width is 'the gap'?

DO THE TEST

DOES IT MATTER?

WHEN IS IT A PROBLEM?



- ✓ Gap is 3+ finger-widths
- ✓ Core is weak
- ✓ Midline is soft + deep
- ✓ Nagging symptoms

IT'S A PROBLEM IF THIS IS YOU...



66% of women

with *Diastasis Recti* have Pelvic Floor Dysfunction. That means at least one of:

- ✓ Weak pelvic floor
- ✓ Pelvic floor pain
- ✓ Urinary incontinence
- ✓ Faecal incontinence
- ✓ Pelvic organ prolapse

THE FIX

1 Love Your Core

Find + re-connect with your core + pelvic floor

Engage the muscles in gentle core exercises, stretches + all movement

When you're ready, workout to strengthen your entire system of core muscles

NO Crunches - sit-ups increase pressure

2 Get aligned

Stand, sit + walk in proper alignment to reduce intra-abdominal pressure

Don't tuck your butt under you

No high heels! Wear minimal or barefoot shoes

3 Eat right



Collagen boosting foods + foods for healing + repair:

Vitamin C Peppers, tomatoes, kiwis

Vitamin A Carrots, sweet potato, kale

Zinc Nuts, seeds, beans

Protein Organic meat, fish, nuts, eggs

Iron Beef, broccoli, dried apricots

Essential fatty acids Oily fish, seeds, nuts

Water

4 Breathe right

Breathing into + from your diaphragm, not your belly or shoulders, relieves pressure