

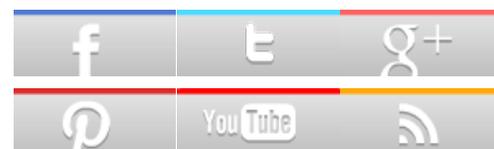
WHY YOUR BODY DOES NOT 'SNAP BACK TOGETHER' AFTER CHILDBIRTH

By [Marianne Ryan](#) on May 15, 2015

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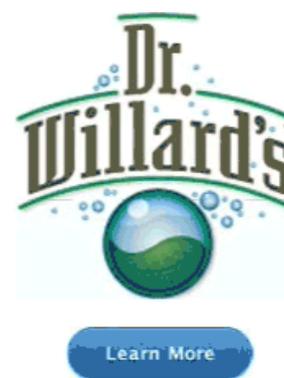


Even though Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, looked incredible when she stepped out of the hospital only 10 hours after delivering her daughter, it is not the norm for the everyday gal. After the excitement of [childbirth](#), first-time moms are often shocked to discover that their bodies don't automatically snap back into shape immediately after their baby is born. The first thing I remember after I got home with my new baby was looking sideways in a mirror and gasping... I still looked pregnant! Was I ever going to see a flat tummy again? Wow, how unfair! How come celebrities looked like hot babes shortly after giving birth?!

Expecting yourself to be "red-carpet ready" soon after delivering your baby is unrealistic, even for most celebrities. It will take time for your belly to shrink no matter who you are. Realistically, it takes at least a month for your body to start to get itself back together, usually longer for most women. Right after birth your body is left with a lot of excess fluid that can take a week or two to lose and it can take a full month for your uterus to shrink back down to its pre-pregnancy size. So don't put yourself under the pressure to be "[Facebook ready](#)" right after you deliver your baby – it's just not going to happen and you have far more important things to worry about!

[Read about the benefits of natural childbirth](#)

Why does it seem that celebrity moms look better faster? It's true that most can afford a lot of extra help, but more importantly, they take postpartum recovery seriously. You may not be able to afford a full-time nanny, night-time baby nurse, personal trainer, and a cook, but you too can take your own recovery seriously. Let your own postpartum needs come front and center. Here are my 5 top tips for getting back in shape once your baby has arrived.



1. Avoid Lifting

Do not lift anything heavier than your newborn baby for the first 6 weeks after childbirth. This is a time to get help with household tasks and lifting a toddler.

2. Pay Attention to your Core

Avoid activities that put pressure on your abdomen, such as getting out of bed by doing a sit up. Instead, get out of bed by rolling over onto your side and swinging your legs over the side of the bed before sitting up.



3. Breathe

Whenever you lift something heavy such as a grocery bag, or a large pot of pasta, EXHALE to reduce the strain on your pelvic floor and **abdominal muscles**.

4. Do Kegel Exercises

Most women can start to do gentle **Kegel-type exercises** the day after childbirth. Exhale gently each time you contract your pelvic floor muscles. Make sure to get medical clearance from your doctor or midwife first.

5. Take a Walk

Try to start a **walking program** as soon as possible. Once you have been given the green light to get out of bed, try to start with 2 or 3 ten-minute walks and gradually build up to a 30-minute walk per day.

[Read 5 myths about pregnancy and exercise](#)

Most women want to get back into pre-pregnancy shape immediately after childbirth, but it is important to make a slow return to full activity. If you follow these 5 simple tips during the first 4 to 6 weeks after childbirth they will help you to get your bod back into pre-pregnancy shape.

[Editor's Note: Marianne Ryan's book, *Baby Bod*, further explains the effects of pregnancy on the body, offers many more tips, and gives advice on the best way to get back into shape after having a baby. There is detailed advice in Chapter 8 for moms who had vaginal deliveries, and Chapter 9 gives advice to moms who had C-sections.]



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Marianne Ryan

Marianne Ryan PT, OCS, is a physical therapist and board-certified orthopedic clinical specialist. She is an award-winning author of the international best selling book, *Baby Bod: Turn Flab to Fab in 12 Weeks Flat*, Clinical Director of MRPT Physical Therapy in New York City, and a spokesperson for the American Physical Therapy Association Media Corps. With more than 30 years' experience, she specializes in helping women reclaim their bodies after childbirth. For information, visit [BabyBodBook.com](#).

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