



**HAPPY CORE, HAPPY MOM!**  
**RELIEVE YOUR PREGNANCY-RELATED BACK PAIN**  
**BY STRENGTHENING YOUR CORE MUSCLES**

**Strengthen Your Core**

*How PT can help you have a more comfortable pregnancy*

**Exercise Essentials**

*Try these exercises to relieve pregnancy pain*

**Healthy Recipe**

*Try this delicious dinner recipe tonight!*

# HAPPY CORE, HAPPY MOM!

## RELIEVE YOUR PREGNANCY-RELATED BACK PAIN BY STRENGTHENING YOUR CORE MUSCLES

It is no secret that pregnancy takes quite a toll on the body. It severely stretches the abdominal wall, causing core muscles to weaken and resulting in back pain. Fortunately, our physical therapists at Iberia Sports & Rehabilitation can help relieve your back pain, both during your pregnancy and after you have given birth. We can help you achieve a complete recovery, even if it has been years since your last pregnancy.

Even if you still exercise regularly, if you do not target your core muscles specifically, an imbalance in muscle strength will occur. When your core is strong, it means your spine is better protected against injury when you twist, lift, or strain your body while doing an activity – such as picking up your little one!

If you have been suffering from back pain either during or after a pregnancy, don't hesitate to contact Iberia Sports & Rehabilitation today. We'll help you relieve your undesirable back pain so you can get back to comfortably doing what matters most – preparing and caring for your bundle of joy.

### WHY AM I EXPERIENCING BACK PAIN WITH PREGNANCY?

If your pregnancy is causing you back pain, you are not alone. In fact, many women report back pain both before and after giving birth. Most expecting mothers report their back pain occurring at the “sacroiliac joint,” which is the area where your pelvis meets your spine. There are many reasons why you may experience prenatal or post-partum back pain, including:

- **Increased weight.** Women typically gain 25-35 pounds during pregnancy. This puts extra stress on the spine, since it is responsible for supporting your weight. The growing baby in your uterus also puts extra pressure on the nerves and blood vessels surrounding your back and pelvis, which can also attribute to your back pain.
- **Separation of muscles.** As your uterus continues to expand throughout your pregnancy, stress is put on your “rectal abdominis” muscles. These muscles run parallel to one another, from

the rib cage to the pubic bone. With continued expansion of the uterus, it is possible for these muscles to separate along the center seam, in a condition known as “diastasis recti.” This may cause or further aggravate your back pain.

- **Changes in posture.** When you're pregnant, your center of gravity changes. To compensate for this, most women will adjust their posture and the way they move, sometimes without even realizing they are doing so. Postural changes may cause a strain in the back, leading to discomfort.
- **Changes in hormones.** During pregnancy, your body releases a hormone known as “relaxin.” This increases joint laxity and – much like its name infers – allows the ligaments and joints in the pelvic area to relax. This is your body's natural way of preparing for vaginal birth; however, the relaxin hormone can also cause ligaments in the spine to loosen. When this happens, instability and pain can ensue.

# STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE MUSCLES AND RELIEVE YOUR BACK PAIN WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY

At Iberia Sports & Rehabilitation, we offer both pre- and post-natal treatments for pregnancy-related pain relief. At your initial appointment, you will be greeted by one of our experienced and dedicated physical therapists who will perform a physical evaluation in order to assess the nature of your symptoms. Your medical history and any health risks will also be discussed and taken into account prior to creating a treatment plan. After your evaluation, your physical therapist will put together an individualized treatment plan for you, aimed at providing relief for your back pain and allowing for a smooth pregnancy and/or recovery from childbirth.

Treatment plans typically involve gentle therapeutic exercises, stretches, and manual therapy. These are all done in order to relieve pain, strengthen your core muscles, and improve posture. Your physical therapist may also suggest additional methods and modalities, such as massage or ice and heat therapies, in order to provide additional relief and optimum function as deemed necessary.

For specific conditions, such as cases regarding diastasis recti, condition-specific treatments will be designed to correct the symptoms. Diastasis recti can interfere with the strengthening of the abdomen muscles, resulting in exceptionally weak core muscles and increased back pain. Our highly-trained physical therapists use the latest evidence-based clinical knowledge in the field to identify and treat this condition, based on its severity and the personal needs of the patient.

## TRY THIS ON YOUR OWN:

In addition to our physical therapy services, there are exercises you can do on your own to try and strengthen your core muscles and relieve your back pain. One common exercise that engages all the layers of your abdominal wall, pelvic muscles, and spinal muscles is as follows:

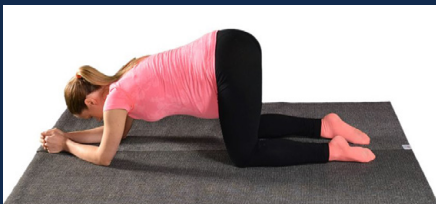
1. Begin by lying on your back, with your hands placed on your lower abdomen. The muscles beneath your hands are known as your "transverse abdominis muscles."
2. Try to activate your transverse abdominis muscles by drawing the muscles together towards your belly button.
3. Hold this position for 10 seconds. Remember to keep breathing as you do so, taking slow, relaxing breaths.
4. Repeat 10 times.

## CONTACT US TODAY:

You don't need to live with back pain during or after your delivery. Contact us today to schedule an appointment, and we'll create a plan to help you along your pregnancy journey and/or childbirth recovery. At Iberia Sports & Rehabilitation, we want to make sure you are as comfortable as possible as you welcome the new addition to your family!

**NEED TO RELIEVE PREGNANCY-RELATED PAIN?**

**TRY THESE EXERCISES AT HOME!**



### FORWARD LEAN ON ELBOWS

Kneel on the floor on your elbows and knees. Lean forward. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat as needed.



### KNEELING HIP STRETCH

Kneel on the floor and lean into your front knee without overextending it. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat as needed on both legs.

**ARE YOU READY FOR A PAIN-FREE LIFE? CALL 337.367.3331 TO SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!**



TRY THIS RECIPE!

## PRESSURE COOKER WINTER SQUASH AND LENTIL STEW

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1 1/2" chunks
- 1 lb. green lentils
- 6 c. chicken broth
- 5 c. packed baby spinach
- 1 tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped peeled fresh ginger
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom

### DIRECTIONS

In pressure-cooker pot on medium, cook shallots and ginger in oil 5 minutes or until shallots are golden, stirring. Add coriander and cardamom; cook 1 minute, stirring. Add squash, lentils, broth and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cover, lock and bring up to pressure on high. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cook 12 minutes. Release pressure by using quick-release function. Stir in spinach, vinegar and 1/2 teaspoon each of salt and pepper.



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



### Alex Darby, Physical Therapist

My name is Alex Darby. I was born and raised in New Iberia, LA and attended New Iberia Senior High School. From there, I attended UL-Lafayette where I obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology. I then went to physical therapy school at LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. I graduated with my Doctorate of Physical Therapy in May of 2018.

I am very passionate about exercise and enjoy doing CrossFit. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling and doing anything outdoors, such as hiking, biking, and canoeing, and tailgating for ULL football games. I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with residents of my hometown.

Learn more about our staff and how they can help you by visiting our website at [isrehab.com](http://isrehab.com)!

## INCONTINENCE AND CHRONIC PELVIC PAIN

If you have pain in your pelvis, it may not always be fully clear what's causing it. Some common causes of pelvic floor dysfunction and chronic pelvic pain include, but are not limited to:

- Pregnancy
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Sacroiliac joint dysfunction
- Levator ani syndrome (increased tension in pelvic floor muscles)
- Coccydynia
- Post-surgical complications (e.g., pain after a hysterectomy, hernia repair, cesarean section, etc.)
- Irritation of the pudendal nerve (which originates near the bottom of your spine)

Any of these conditions may lead to inadequate support of the organs contained within your pelvic cavity, increased pressure or inflammation of nerves, muscles, and other connective tissues (including your bladder), and impaired pelvic bone alignment. These symptoms can be frustrating, painful, and embarrassing, and may limit your tolerance to daily participation in desired activities, including exercise.

Other symptoms frequently appear with pelvic pain, including incontinence, bloating, abdominal pressure, reluctance to strain while defecating, and pain in the low back, buttocks, and hips. You may also have decreased tolerance to a variety of activities including sitting or standing, walking, exercise, and sexual intercourse.

### How A Physical Therapist Can Treat Pelvic Pain

Every patient presenting with chronic pelvic pain is unique. If you come to see a physical therapist for your pelvic dysfunction, you'll be taken through a thorough physical examination and patient history questionnaire. He or she will ask you specific questions about your pain, what makes it worse and better, and whether you have a history of any related issues.

***Are you struggling with pelvic pain? Frustrated and concerned about incontinence? For both short-term and long-lasting relief without the need for invasive interventions or medications, call us today! We can help you to start feeling better today!***