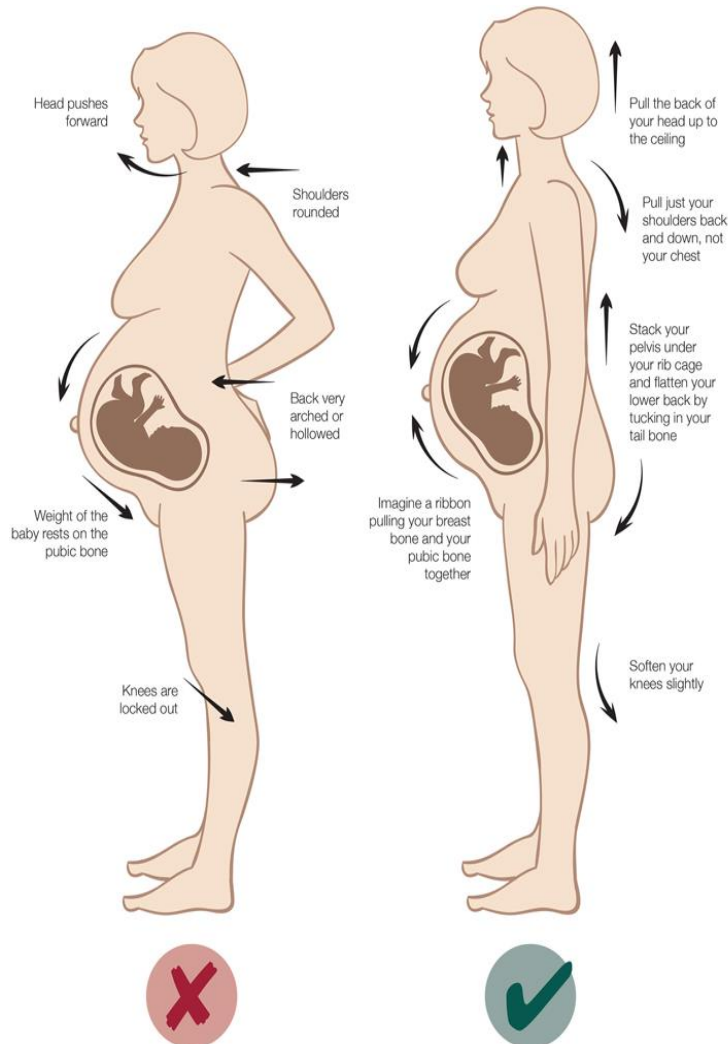


Pregnancy related pain and posture

Feeling uncomfortable in the pelvis and back can be common during pregnancy, caused by changes in shape, weight and hormones. The lower back has a natural curve called a lordosis, this provides a shock-absorbing benefit, like a spring effect. However, within pregnancy, this postural curve can become exaggerated. The increased weight of a growing baby can cause the pelvis to tilt forwards, increasing the curve on the lower back. The abdominal muscles also become long and stretched to accommodate for the baby, making them less supporting of the trunk and pelvis.

Try adjusting your posture to improve your comfort.

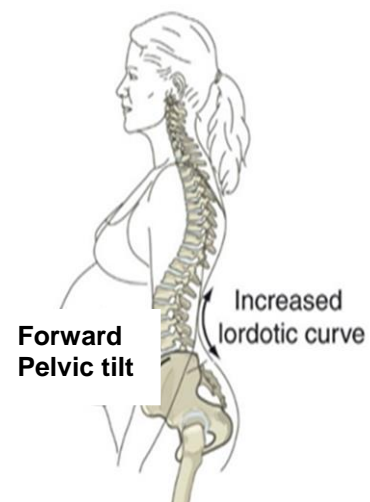


The pain will often disappear once the baby is born or within 3 months post-natal.

Aggravating factors may include:

- standing
- sitting
- coughing or sneezing
- walking
- constipation

Easing Factors can be seen on page 3.



Some general advice

1. Squeeze your buttocks

- And gently draw in your tummy muscles before changing position such as moving from a sitting position to a standing position.

2. Getting in/out of bed:

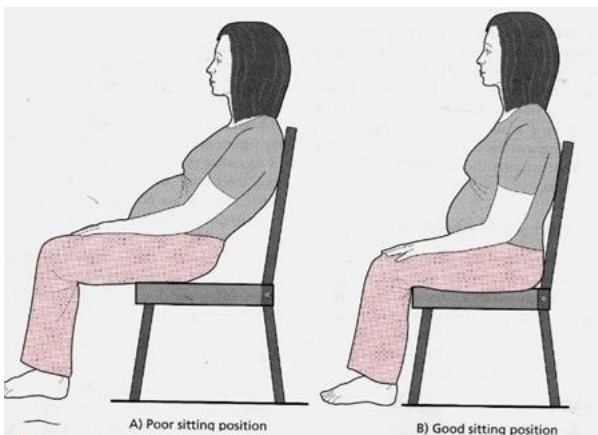
- To get in, sit on the side of your bed
- Lay down on your side using your arms to support, keeping your legs together bending the knees and bringing them up onto the bed
- Do the reverse to get out of bed, roll onto your side
- Avoid a sit-up action or swinging one leg in/out without the other

3. Getting in/ out of the car

- Have a plastic bag on the car seat to make turning easier (remove before driving)
- Make sure the seat is pushed back when you get in/out
- Keep legs together as much as possible getting in/out of the car

4. Try not to sit for too long

- Most women find changing positions every 20-30 minutes improves comfort
- Regularly move your back and pelvis using 'the pelvic tilt' exercises
- Using a firm hard backed chair instead of a soft sofa with a rolled towel placed in the natural curve of the spine between you and the chair for added support.



Correct feeding position



Bad feeding position



5. Once your baby is born consider good posture when completing everyday tasks such as changing or feeding.

- Use pillows to support your arms and your baby, pop your feet up on a stool and try not to lean forwards.
- When changing your baby, find a surface that is high enough and ensures that you do not need to lean over.

Exercises, resting comfortably and minor problems

Pelvic tilts

These can be done in sitting, standing and on all fours.

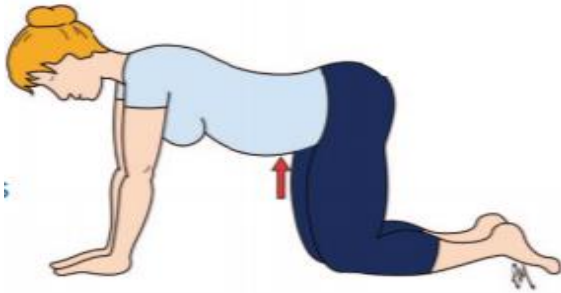
Try first in sitting.

- First slump all the way back to make a 'C' shape with your lower back.
- Now sit upright so you are on your sitting bones.
- Rock gently back and forth between these two positions. Most people feel this moves their lower back gently.
- Now find the midway point. To stand squeeze your bottom muscles.

Anterior pelvic tilt



Posterior pelvic tilt



Continue if comfortable. Try to do these throughout the day 20 repetitions at a time. These will help to keep your lower back and pelvis more comfortable.



Getting Comfortable

Stress and tension are common in pregnancy. Using pillows for support, practicing relaxation techniques antenatally and postnatally will help you rest more effectively. Have a look at useful information at the end for help with this.

Minor Problems

Constipation and leg cramps are common. Sitting correctly on the toilet can help with emptying your bowels more easily. Try to drink enough fluids.



Some women find it helps to exercise their feet before bed. Try ankle circles x 10 each way, calf stretches or calf massage.



Pelvic floor training

Five easy ways to exercise your pelvic floor

It is important to focus on the right group of muscles when exercising your pelvic floor. You should not be working the muscles in your legs, buttocks or above your tummy button and you must not hold your breath. Feeling some tension in your lower abdominal muscles is normal.

1. Tighten the muscles around your back passage (as if trying to stop yourself passing wind) and draw them up and forwards. At the same time, tighten the muscles around your front passage (as if you are trying to stop passing water). You should feel a 'lift and squeeze' inside. Once you have identified the right muscles, try and see what they can do. How long can you squeeze them for? How many times can you repeat this? Work towards being able to complete the following routine:

2. Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles as hard as you can. Hold for a count of 10 seconds. If your muscles feel too weak to hold up to 10 seconds, aim to build up the time slowly. Repeat the exercise up to 10 times.

3. Tighten and lift your pelvic floor muscles as quickly and strongly as you can, then relax. Do this up to 10 times.

4. Aim to perform these 3 times over the course of the day, every day. Each set of exercises takes about 2 ½ minutes.

5. Try and squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles each time you pick up anything heavy (including babies, car seats) and before you cough or sneeze. This helps your pelvic floor muscles to support the increasing downward pressure on your body.

Keep Practicing

(CSP 2020)

Contact details

Therapy Services Poole: 0300 019 2121

Therapy Services Christchurch: 0300 019 4418

Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB
Christchurch Hospital, Fairmile Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2JX

Author: **Sally Sheppard** Date: **January 2022** Version: **Three** Review date: **January 2025** Ref: **007/22**

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