

## Birthing &

### *Fitness*

## Exercises for Expectant Moms

Expectant mothers don't always have it easy — eating for two, food cravings and packing on extra pounds are only a few of the issues that pregnant women deal with. To help with staying slim during pregnancy, Erika Bloom has introduced the Plus Method. Combining Pilates with the best of complementary body methods such as yoga, sports conditioning and Feldenkrais, the following exercises that can be done anywhere, without the use of any props.

- **Pelvic Floor (Kegels)** — Sitting in a chair, engage the pelvic floor by squeezing as though to stop yourself from urinating. Hold through one long exhale, then release and inhale. Repeat the engagement on each exhale for 10-20 reps. Muscles worked: pubococcygeus muscles.
- **All-fours Opposition Reach** — Start on all fours, keeping abdominals lifted

against the belly, long spine, shoulder blades down and wide. Reach one leg back and the opposite arm forward, lifting both straight out in line with the torso. Hold for three breaths, then switch sides, lifting the opposite leg and arm. Repeat for a total of four on each side. Muscles worked: abdominals, back extensors, glutes, hamstrings, deltoid and lower trapezius.



- **Side-lying Pushup** — Lie on your left side, both knees bent, right leg behind the left. Place the left forearm on the belly so that you are lying on the upper part of the arm. Place the right palm on the ground in front of the breastbone. Press into the right hand to straighten the arm and lift the torso off the ground. Bend the elbow to lower the torso back to the ground. Repeat 7-10 times on each side. Muscles worked: obliques, chest and triceps.

- **Squat on the Wall** — Start with the back against the wall (or a physioball on the wall), feet hip-width apart, heels approximately one foot in front of the hips. Bend the knees, keeping the knees in line with the feet, sliding the back (or ball) down the wall. Hold at the bottom, not allowing the knees or hips to bend more than 90 degrees or the knees to go past the toes. Press back up to straighten knees, keeping the back on the wall or ball. Repeat 10-20 times. Muscles worked: quadriceps, hamstrings and glutes.

- **Side Legs, Butterfly** — Lie on your left side with both knees bent and legs stacked so that heels are in line with the torso and the knees are in front. Rotate the right thigh out to open the right knee towards the ceiling while keeping the feet touching. Turn the leg in to bring the legs back to a stacked position to finish. Perform 15 repetitions on each side. Muscles worked: external rotators, glutes and abductors. ♥

*Article courtesy of Erika Bloom, owner of Erika Bloom Pilates.*