

Thursday 10.7.21

Customizing for the Pregnant & Postpartum Athlete

These are all suggested movements and strategies. There is no one size fits all approach to fitness in pregnancy/postpartum. Start to build awareness, be able to ask questions of yourself on how a movement, load, intensity, etc helps support your individual considerations and goals as well as your postpartum recovery and long term core/pelvic health. More detailed information can be found via the links in the document if you'd like to learn more about changes in each trimester, breathing strategies, etc.

Program A Workout	Shift
30 Toes to Bar (V-ups) 60 KBS 90 DUs 20 T2B 40 KBS 60 DUs 10 T2B 20 KBS 40 DUs	10 min AMRAP 10 sit ups 20 Russian KBS 30 single unders/ hopovers

Pregnancy Suggestions:

See below and attached links for more details and additional ways to customize your workout as you navigate your pregnancy/postpartum journey. These are suggested timelines and customizations- there is a lot of gray and that's ok!

Early Pregnancy	Mid to Late Pregnancy
<p>Program A Workout</p> <p>*Rest between sets as needed or rest 5 -10 breaths between movements <i>as needed*</i></p> <p>20-30 T2B, Knee raises, toes to rig, alt. V-ups or hip thrusts</p> <p>60 RKBS</p> <p>90 DUs, Single Unders or 1:00 farmer carry/row/bike</p> <p>15-20 T2B, Knee raises, toes to rig, alt v-ups, or hip thrusts</p> <p>40 RKBS</p> <p>60 DUs, Singles, or 1:00 farmer carry/row/bike</p> <p>5-10 T2B, knee raises, toes to rig, alt v-ups or hip thrusts</p> <p>20 RKBS</p> <p>40 DUs, singles, or :30 farmer carry/bike/row</p>	<p>Shift Version</p> <p>10 Min AMRAP for Quality</p> <p>Rest between sets or rest 5 -10 breaths between movements as needed*</p> <p>20 alt. KB marches/incline plank shoulder taps/hip thrusts!</p> <p>15 Russian KBS/Sumo DL (if SPD or SI try a narrow stance RDL or Goodmorning or adjust to high pull)</p> <p>20 step single side farmer carry on each side,</p> <p>20 alternating low plate stepups or :45 row/bike</p>

Intensity during pregnancy is recommended to a moderate to moderate high intensity rather than an all out effort. ACOG Guidelines suggest a talk test which means being able to speak a short sentence (ex: I really love these lunges!) as a way to monitor effort. You can learn more [here](#) in this resource guide.

Pregnancy Tips/Reminders:

- Remember to use the talk test to help measure exertion
- 1st Trimester add rest and give yourself grace - fatigue is a very real thing as your body undergoes tremendous changes.
- Think about the risk vs reward of movement. How will this movement benefit you now, your postpartum recovery and your long term core/pelvic floor health?
- Try new breathing strategies. Example: an exhale through the full range of motion and reset with inhale/relax belly, glute, PF between reps. See [resource guide](#) for more.
- Fitness freedom! Adjust range of motion, reps, intensity, duration, breathing strategy as needed- you have to meet yourself where you are!

- Pregnant athletes use a load that you can easily breath through. If you have pain, PF symptoms or it just doesn't feel right, adjust load, volume, intensity, the ROM, etc.
- 2nd/3rd Trimester: If you have pubis symphysis or SI pain in a movement pause for now. Check in with breath, position and tension strategies, sometimes adjusting a little can help! Oftentimes adjusting to a more narrow stance like a narrow stance box squat, narrow stance elevated suitcase deadlift or glute bridge with a gentle ball squeeze can feel good. *See below for more information*.
- If you have core/pf symptoms like leaking/heaviness in KBS try a Russian KBS, lowering load, adjusting to less dynamic movement like a sumo deadlift & check in with breath, position & tension.
- If you leak, have heaviness, pain during DUs adjust to lower impact like a farmer carry, [row](#), bike or low plate step ups! (It's not forever just for now!)
- If you have coning it's an indication of pressure- not a bad thing, however it may be a sign to readjust the movement & try strategies to manage pressure differently.
- I recommend most athletes pause jump rope in the 2nd trimester due to adding additional load/demands to pelvic floor. (Risk vs. reward).
- Focus on intention rather than intensity.
- Have fun! Remember this is just for now!
- Look for the opportunity to build forward during this season rather than focusing on what you're not currently training.

Postpartum Suggestions:

See below and attached links for more details and additional ways to customize your workout as you navigate your pregnancy/postpartum journey. These are suggested timelines and customizations- there is a lot of gray and that's ok!

Early Postpartum (6-16 weeks) *this time frame is not one size fits all*	16 weeks+ postpartum (or after rehab & rebuilding of foundational strength) gradually progress as recover & build strength
<p>3 sets (reduce to 1 or 2 sets if needed)</p> <p>:30 incline breathing</p> <p>8- 10 banded pressdowns</p> <p>8- 10 reps legs only deadbug with overhead band hold OR floor march</p> <p>Rest 2:00</p> <p>3 sets</p> <p>8-10 tall kneeling hinges or band pull throughs</p> <p>10 calf raises with a slow lower (3 seconds)</p> <p>:30 farmer carry each side (use a weight comparable to baby in car seat) or row</p>	<p>Shift Version</p> <p>10 min AMRAP for Quality</p> <p>5-8 bar hanging single knee raises/knee raises/ toes to bar progression video # 2 OR</p> <p>8-10 alternating v-ups</p> <p>15 Russian KBS</p> <p>5-10 reps or :20-:30 of heel drops, high slow jumps, or penguin drill (progressing towards those DUs! See below)</p>

Postpartum Tips/Reminders:

- You should be cleared by your medical team & I recommend visiting a pelvic health therapist in person or virtually. Once given all clear proceed with a yellow light instead of green.
- Studies indicate to wait at least a 12 week minimum postpartum before reintroducing impact movements like jumping. See link for study below.
- Think about intention over intensity & quality over quantity. Low & Slow progressing over time.
- If you have pain or symptoms while doing a movement try to adjust to something different. Try a different breath, position, tension first to see if that can make a difference.
- Early postpartum: try an exhale through the full ROM & reset with inhale/ relax belly/pf between reps as needed. This can be especially helpful during lunges if you find yourself off balance.
- Adjust ROM, reps, intensity, duration, breathing strategy as needed- meet yourself where you are!

- Even though you may feel ready right away to start kipping toes to bar or double unders, first provide an opportunity for your body to heal and regain connection, coordination and strength before moving to more dynamic movements.
- Work on setting a foundation of learning strategies, controlling movement, loading it, & then you'll be ready to add some dynamic movement back in!
- Slow is smooth is fast!
- Have fun! Remember this is just for now & look for the opportunity to build forward utilizing fitness freedom in workouts to customize them for your individual considerations.

Questions to start asking, considering or building awareness on during your pregnancy or postpartum.

- Are you experiencing pain, leaking, heaviness in the vagina, or doming/coning along the midline of the core?
- Are you able to breathe through movements or are you holding your breath?
- Are you gripping your abdomen or clenching your glutes? Evaluate tension you are carrying in daily activities in and out of the gym.
- Risk vs Reward: Just because you can do something should you?
- Become aware of your tendencies in positions (ex: standing more to one side, glutes tucked under the pelvis, rib cage pointing upwards, etc.)

Quick Notes on Coning & Pubis Symphysis

*Coning is an indication of pressure in our core. As pregnancy progresses, the linea alba thins and widens to adjust for a growing baby. This is completely normal! Try not to be scared of coning but utilize it as feedback to adjust how you're managing pressure within that movement to see if you can change it. We have the opportunity to control what we can during pregnancy and can use this as information to help us know when to start potentially adjusting movements.

You may see coning in your toes to bar or kettlebell swing. Try adjusting to some of the strategies in the videos! For overhead KBS oftentimes adjusting to a Russian style swing can help.

SI or pubis symphysis pain may also start to occur in 2nd/3rd trimester. Try not to push into the movement if you experience this. For SI pain or pubis symphysis pain oftentimes adopting a more narrow stance and sticking with bilateral movements rather than unilateral can help as well as trying different breathing, tension and position strategies. Stretching can help along with incorporating movements that continue to strengthen hips, glutes and core. Please reach out for support and work with a pelvic floor therapist, Webster certified chiropractor or qualified prenatal coach. If KBS feel a bit too dynamic today, adjust to a narrow stance elevated deadlift, glute bridge, or even a high pull.

[Video for glute bridge with ball/yoga block](#)

[Narrow squat](#)

Toes to Bar customizations

- [Pallof press](#)
- [PVC lat pulldowns](#)
- [Bent knee hollow hold](#) (Postpartum)
- [Bar Hang](#) (Postpartum)
- [Floor Marches](#) (Postpartum)
- [Banded Hold Legs Only Deadbug](#) (Postpartum)
- [Early Pregnancy Toes to Bar Adjustments](#)
- [Video 1](#) Toes to Bar Postpartum Progression
- [Video 2](#) Toes to Bar Postpartum Progression
- Instagram Post on Situp Variability for Coning, Prolapse, Pelvic Health:
https://www.instagram.com/tv/CLKS-s8jqtE/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Instagram post on march variations:
https://www.instagram.com/p/CK7XQ6JjRDy/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

[Video from 21.3 and 21.4 Open Workout with Toes to Bar Tips](#)

Kettlebell Customizations, Breath, Position Tips

- [Single arm high pull](#)
- [Kneeling Hip Hinge](#) (postpartum)
- Sumo deadlift
- RDL
- [Kettlebell Tips](#)
- Instagram post on hinging (deadlift but beneficial for KBS!)
https://www.instagram.com/reel/CNfKw2_j7U4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
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For more information, details, and strategies click the attached [Pregnancy & Postpartum](#) workbook link [here](#).

Double Unders and the Pregnant/Postpartum Athlete

Are double unders safe to do during pregnancy?

What is a good substitute?

Will I always leak during jumping?

What if I experience heaviness, leaking, pain or pressure?

When can I start doing double unders again postpartum?

Double unders (and jumping in general we will cover more in the upcoming weeks) can be difficult and frustrating to navigate especially if you have been experiencing any symptoms like leaking, heaviness, pressure or pain. However, there is hope if you've been experiencing any of these symptoms! Group expert, Dr. Terri Robertson Elder will speak more on this in Week 3.

Below are some general timelines, progressions and strategies that you can start utilizing now. Oftentimes in adjusting small things like breath, tension, position as well as some mechanics can make huge changes in managing symptoms. These are starting places but each individual is unique in the what, how and why depending on their tendencies and considerations. Working with a pelvic floor physical therapist to understand your PF is a great first step as well!

Each person will weigh the risk vs reward of the movement and how it relates to them, their individual circumstances and long term goals.

I typically recommend that athletes start pausing jump rope sometime in the 2nd trimester. Jumping is an impact and dynamic movement which can cause additional load/pressure/demand to the pelvic floor which is already experiencing more load/pressure/demands due to pregnancy. Pressure isn't bad, however during pregnancy we have an opportunity to control how and why we move. With that, we can choose to limit or adjust movements as a way to mitigate (not necessarily prevent) our core/pelvic floor health. What we can't control is our birth experience but that is another topic.

In addition, if we are experiencing leaking/heaviness prior to pregnancy this can be an indicator of being an opportunity to better manage pressure and coordinate our system.

Timeline & Customizations for Double Unders

Pregnancy

Add Link: video with overall thoughts

1st trimester- typically ok, however if you do have pain, leaking, heaviness or pressure in your pelvic floor pause the movement to try a different breath, position, tension or movement altogether.

2nd and 3rd trimester- most athletes don't feel comfortable jumping and will want to adjust. Many other athletes may feel fine jumping! I tend to recommend that most athletes pause jumping/dubs when the baby bump becomes noticeable. We have an opportunity to potentially reduce impact/demands to the pelvic floor during this time, controlling what we can. Ultimately it is an athletes choice to weigh their individual risk vs. reward of a movement and how it may benefit them in pregnancy and their postpartum recovery.

There is so much opportunity to build skill and strength balance as well as learn strategies to support you now and postpartum. Adjusting to a movement like farmer carries build core strength, grip strength and conditioning. Adjusting to a bike or row can help keep the stimulus for metabolic conditioning. Kettlebell swings, low plate step ups, banded walks can all be amazing ways to customize while meeting yourself where you are. Pausing double unders or jumping does not mean you will lose them, they will be back. As one of my mentors, Antony Lo says, "it's not forever, just for now."

Double Under Customizations in Pregnancy

- Farmer carries (in all the ways- single arm, double, front rack, single arm overhead, overhead, offset (two different weights), mixed rack (1 front rack one suitcase), etc.
- Bike
- [Row- link here for rowing tips and strategies](#) (Instagram)
- Russian kettlebell swing
- Low plate step ups
- Banded lateral walks or monster walks
- Walk

Progressing Double Unders Postpartum

Learn how to connect breath, core, pelvic floor first, and rebuild a foundation of core, hip, glute strength. We progressively build towards dynamic and impact movements these being the last to return in our postpartum program- even if you aren't experiencing symptoms. It's also recommended to wait at least a 12 week minimum postpartum (with a recommendation of at least 3-6 months postpartum) before reintroducing higher impact movements. Delivery experience, stress, breast feeding, overall healing of the body, etc. are all important factors to consider. To take a deeper dive, check out this amazing study from 2019 Return to Run (speaks to high impact) Guidelines which can be found [here](#).

I have yet to work with an athlete that has regretted taking their time progressively building back to double unders! In fact, many athletes may find that they have more capability as well as efficiency than pre pregnancy due to the foundation built & strategies utilized postpartum!

Postpartum Suggested Progression:

- Breath and coordination of core/pelvic floor (today's workout we are working on breath in an [incline position](#))
- [Glute Bridges](#)
- [Progression 1 and 3 via Street Parking Mamas](#)
- [Squats/Deadlifts/Lunges](#)
- [Calf raises](#)
- [Plate step ups](#)
- [Heel drops](#)
- [Low jumps](#)
- [Tall high slow jumps](#)
- High slow single unders
- [Running jump rope drill](#)
- [Penguin drill](#)
- [Single, single, double](#)
- Doubles

Check out the below videos on progression guides, tips, strategies and more!

[Video 1 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)

[Video 2 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)

[Video 3 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)

[Video 4 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)

[Video 5 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)

[Video 6 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)

[Video 7 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)- Review of Strategies

[Video 8 DU Postpartum Progression Series](#)- Tips to add volume

**** When rebuilding jumps start with a few seconds and then rest. Ex: 10 work :30 rest. Gradually build time and reduce rest as tolerated. Same concept for reps. Start low sets and reps then gradually increase over each week as needed. If you experience any symptoms or don't feel quite ready to add more or move to the next progression stay there for a bit longer!****

General Strategy Tips for DUs:

- Breath: pay attention to your breath. Are you holding it? If so, try short quick exhales.
- Tension: are you gripping and squeezing your abs and/or glutes? If so, try relaxing these areas a little more.
- Position: are your feet piking in front or is your chest pointed at the sky? If so, try stacking in a stacked position. Your chest forward and weight midfoot imagining jumping to the ceiling (up) rather than piking the legs.

Does the return to double unders have to include all of these movements? No. However there should be a progressive return where strength and coordination is built first, then adding

volume, then the dynamic movement. Some people may be able to return to double unders within a few months postpartum while it may take others 6,9,12 months or longer. That's ok!

Take a peek at the Street Parking double under program as a way to rebuild double unders when you're ready. It allows for progressive overload and consistently has you working towards your goals!

Video Links for DUs & Strategies

Street Parking Double Under Tips/Progression Program

<https://spmembersonly.com/double-under-progression>

Video from Street Parking on less efficient ways to DU! Take a look and then record yourself!

<https://spmembersonly.com/double-under-progression>

Instagram Post on Jump Rope:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/COyEvRwDziO/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Dr. Terri Robertson Elder's Strategies Resource Sheet

<https://spmembersonly.com/sp-mama-movements/urinary-leakage-with-exercise-troubleshooting?q=Leaking>