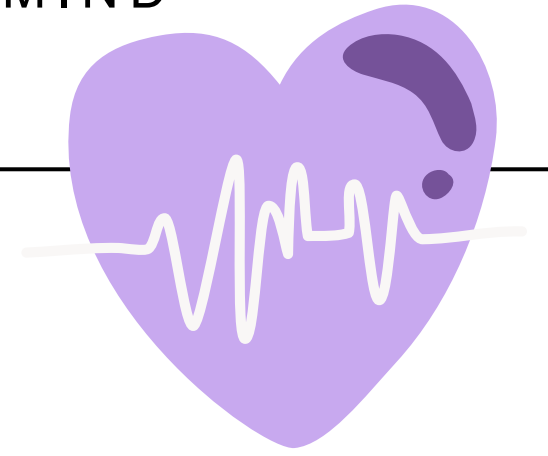


HOW EVERYDAY MOVEMENT SUPPORTS MOOD AFTER BIRTH

AFTER BIRTH, YOUR BODY AND MIND HAVE GONE THROUGH MANY CHANGES. GENTLE MOVEMENT CAN HELP RECONNECT YOUR MIND AND BODY AND EASE LOW MOOD.



What's Happening in Your Body After Birth?



After birth, your body goes through many changes, and that's normal. Your muscles and ligaments may still be healing from pregnancy and birth, so early movement should be gentle as your body regains strength.

Hormone levels shift quickly, sleep is often limited, and your body's stress response may stay turned on. Many parents feel like their bodies are in "survival mode."

Movement in the postpartum period should be gentle and build over time.

Movement Helps with Emotional Regulation

When your emotions feel heavy or "stuck," gentle movement for just 5-10 minutes can help by sending calming signals to your brain. You might feel:

- Less anxiety
- Less brain fog
- More safe and settled in your body
- More manageable emotions
- Increased sense of confidence and control
- More energy

Consistency Matters More Than Intensity

You don't have to complete a long or intense workout to enjoy the benefits of moving your body. Try some gentle options to get started:

- Walking while holding or wearing your baby
- Tidying up a room or folding laundry
- Standing, pacing, or swaying
- Rolling your shoulders or stretching your neck and back
- Going on a short walk with a friend, neighbor, or family member

Use What Works For You

- There is no "right" way to move after birth.
- If movement feels supportive, that is enough.
- If movement does not feel possible right now, that is okay too.
- Movement has no moral value. It is not good or bad, earned or deserved.
- Support looks different for everyone. Your needs matter, and they may change from day to day.

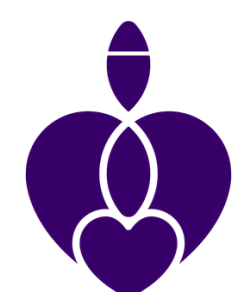
Reach Out to Your Provider If You are Experiencing:

- Ongoing sadness, anxiety, or hopelessness
- Feeling overwhelmed, numb, or disconnected
- Trouble bonding with your baby
- Unusual or scary thoughts, or thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Symptoms that are not getting better

You are not alone. Help is available!

References

Daley et al., 2019. Physical activity and postnatal depression: systematic review.
McCurdy et al., 2025. Postpartum activity impact on maternal depression and anxiety.
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