



## Losing baby weight

**?** I'm returning to tri training after having a baby 12 weeks ago. I kept fairly fit through my pregnancy with swimming, some turbo sessions and lots of walking. I now find that after I run, I get quite sore in the muscles across my pelvis, which is understandable really. Any suggestions how I can strengthen these? I'm doing a sprint distance at the end of June, and the London Tri Olympic. Also, what's the best way of losing weight?  
**Emma Saville**, email

**→** Firstly Emma, you should congratulate yourself for getting back into exercise just a few weeks after your new arrival!

Pelvic pain can be common in this area when giving birth because it can create scar tissue. When exercising this scar tissue can easily be pulled and aggravated. Scar tissue will never go but it can be strengthened through core work and potentially reformed to reduce discomfort.

I suggest you work on your pelvic floor muscles and transverse abdominals. Start by lying on your back with your spine in neutral, with the pelvic bones and pubic bones level, as if you could rest a glass of water on your belly button. Place a pillow between your knees with your calves parallel and 90° horizontal to the floor and front of thighs parallel 90° vertical (1).

Engage pelvic floor muscles, then exhale, drop the toes as close to the buttocks and floor as possible without the pelvis moving or tilting (2). Inhale back to the start. Repeat until core is tired. Do not let the tummy shake.

To burn off excess inches rather than losing weight, I'd suggest a combination of your cardio and resistance work, as it burns more calories because you're gaining more muscle proportion. Choose big muscle group exercises such as lunges, squats and hamstring Swiss ball curls. See a gym instructor for advice on these or search the web for pictures of exercise positions. Good luck! **DL**

Make sure your bike set-up is adjusted for the Lakes. Unless you're very strong, a compact (50/34) up front and a 12-28 at the back are a must.

For run preparation, high resistance work on a step machine or cross trainer (legs only) is an excellent substitute. Crank the machine up to max and grind away for an hour. Exercises such as single-legged squats, high bench step-ups and walking lunges are great leg strengtheners and can easily be included in a circuit workout.

Skipping is good for conditioning your calves and getting them used to being up on tippy toes. Stair repeats are another method for gaining hill-specific fitness. Running up and down even a short set of 20-30 steps for 30mins will log up an impressive amount of total ascent, develop good 'up

on your toes and short step' climbing technique and help condition your legs for descending, too. **NC**

## Too young?

**?** I've been doing triathlon for a year now, but recently my seven-year-old daughter has been coming on runs with me, and she's now entering a 1.5km run race. But she wants to run further. Should I just let her build up slowly or is it too much for her age? Would professional coaching be preferable? If you think it's okay, can you prescribe some sessions she could do each week?  
**Jamie Kavanagh**, Stroud

**→** The key to involving seven-year-olds is to make it fun, meaning if your daughter wants to run with you and she wants to race a mile, then great – it's not too far, but don't go too



If your child wants to get into running, it pays to make sure they have fun along the way

much further and certainly don't make it a must-do task. Better still, she should be encouraged to learn how to sprint, jump and throw things. Have a go at loads of activities and don't focus on one event. This will actually help her acquire all the coordination and

core skills you need to become a better all-round runner.

At this age, coaching, as such, isn't the right word, but getting your daughter involved with a local athletics club that incorporates sports hall athletics is a good start, as it includes all of the above events **→**