

# Salsa Babies

# Health & Safety

## Guidelines

### 1 When to Start

Your baby should be at least 6 weeks of age and can continue with the Salsa Babies program as long as you are comfortable supporting your baby's weight in the carrier. You should have had your 6-week postpartum check-up as well as the "okay" from your doctor for both you and your baby to participate in this activity. MORE TIME MAY BE REQUIRED IF TRAUMATIC BIRTH OCCURRED.

### 2 Proper use of carrier (see Salsa Babies Tips for Safe Baby-Wearing)

Make sure your baby is safely secured into his or her carrier according to the guidelines of the manufacturer. The carrier should be age and weight-appropriate. Slings are not recommended. Shoulder straps should be snug so that there is not a lot of slack between the baby and your body. The top of baby's head should be just below your chin. Baby's head should always be supported and many **experts are now recommending that babies face inward at all times**. For more information see [Salsa Babies Tips for Safe Baby-wearing](#).

### 3 Gentle Movements

All movements should be smooth and gentle, not jerky and no jumping. Side to side movements and turns should be slow enough so that the baby's head and neck remain stable, so avoid quick changes in direction and don't try performing the same Salsa Babies moves to a tempo that is too fast.

### 4 Hydration

Stay hydrated throughout the workout and take frequent water breaks, especially if you are breastfeeding.

### 5 Postpartum Modifications

Many postpartum health issues are due to the fact that ligaments and joints can remain loose for at least three months after birth. During pregnancy, changes to cartilage cause pelvic bones to be more flexible for delivery. These bones can separate further during pregnancy or from the pressure of the birthing process. It is quite painful and can take up to six months to heal.

Precautions and Modifications for this condition would include keeping the width of steps narrow and avoiding groin stretches, twisting and bending. Physiotherapy and the use of a hip stability belt may be useful here.



**6****Appropriate Footwear**

Hips typically widen with pregnancy and can change the insertion point at the knees, and the arch of your foot can also change. This can result in heel pain, or “Postpartum Plantar Fasciitis”. Wearing appropriate supportive shoes to avoid problems with postpartum plantar fasciitis is recommended, as is a shoe with a sole that won’t allow you to slip and fall.

**7****Knee Problems**

Knee problems can also be common postpartum, again due to hips spreading during pregnancy and changing the insertion point at the knee. Be sure that knees do not extend beyond the toes (keep at 90 degrees) and keep toes pointing forward inline with the knees. Exercises such as squats and lunges do not necessarily need to be avoided, but correct form is critical to injury prevention.

**8****Neck, Shoulder and Back Pain**

Neck, shoulder and back pain can be common postpartum from carrying your baby on the same side or from slouching during feeding, or can be triggered by carrying a car seat or pushing stroller – movements that your body is not accustomed to. Weakened core muscles can also be a contributing factor.

Be sure to maintain good posture throughout your workout, with your tummy tucked in and shoulders back, and follow the proper guidelines for carrier. It is wise to invest in a good carrier that offers lumbar support and waist support if you are prone to these types of problems.

**9****Abdominal Separation**

Separation of the abdominal muscles or “Diastasis Recti” can occur during pregnancy and may persist postpartum. Women with this condition should avoid twisting/torque movements and keep their core in line with hips square. All women with this condition should be assessed by a member of your community trained in abdominal separation assessment and recommended to physiotherapy.

**10****Warning Signs to Stop Exercise and Consult with Your Doctor**

- unusual fatigue or muscle pain
- feeling light-headed or dizzy
- abdominal pain
- blurred vision
- fever or severe headache
- inability to talk or shortness of breath
- vaginal bleeding or changes to lochia (postpartum vaginal fluid becomes pink or red, or more heavy than usual)

