

Mommy Muscles

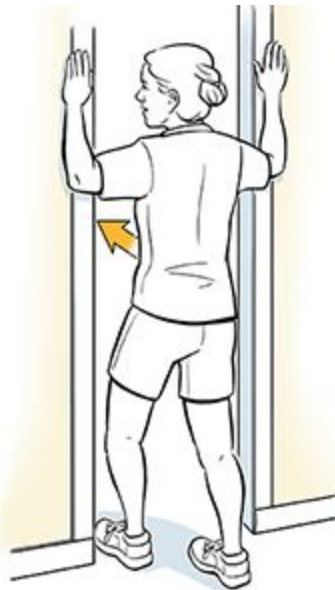
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Guest Post for Portraits by Anne-Marie

Mommy muscles - *n (noun)* - soft tissue pain and/or discomfort due to new usage of one's body, specifically new mothers.

Recommended stretches:

- Doorway Stretch
 - How to perform: Stand in a doorway, open your arms to support along door frame, and slowly step forward thru the door.
 - *Tip: Keep your chest upward and head neutral to prevent hurting your neck or shoulders during the deep stretch.*



- Scapular Wall Holds
 - How to perform: Stand with your back to the wall, Step a couple of inches away and bend your arms to 90 degrees. Keep your elbows in by your sides and drive them back toward the wall. Do not shrug your shoulders as you drive your elbows back and pinch your shoulder blades down and together, With your elbows back, lean into the wall so that only your elbows are touching. Do not let your upper arms or back touch the wall.
 - *Tip: Relax your head back instead of tucking your chin. Pinch your shoulder blades down and back while keeping your core tight as you lean into the wall. Squeeze your glutes and don't arch your low back. Really press your chest out so that you feel this move low between your shoulder blades.*



As a Sports Chiropractor I never thought the same treatments and techniques used on today's top athletes would also be a huge benefit for the "New Mommy" population. My daily job involves working with all different types of people, from different backgrounds, and who perform different activities on a repetitive basis. I spend focused time with each patient trying to understand their movements. The better I understand the activity, the better I can view the musculoskeletal system work as a complex and integrated movement pattern. Human anatomy has not changed in hundreds of years. If you know the motion being completed, the muscles which work together to create the motion, and where these soft tissues attach, it becomes quite obvious to me what the problem is and how to address it.

Within the last year I have seen an influx of pregnant soon-to-be mothers and mothers after delivery as new patients.

Enter the new mother, complaining of numbness in her hands, with dark circles under her eyes, on the verge of tears describing the stabbing pins and needles in her hand every time she wakes up or tries to feed her screaming newborn. I slowly calm the mother down and begin to explain the situation I see from my chair.

1. She is not sleeping the same. Take a deep breath.
2. She just gave birth to a living human. Smile.
3. She is breastfeeding a 10 lbs mini-me.
4. She is experiencing healing changes within her body.
5. She is handling a delicate person who is very small. (small socks, small clothes, small diapers)
6. She is using her body in a way she has never used it before. (or not in a while)
7. She is using her "Mommy muscles".

I address the mother with an eye like they are an athlete. I try to look at what they did before the pregnancy, during, and after. I ask about their training, diet, hydration, rest, etc. Our bodies respond to how we use them and how we treat them.

I love to analyze the patient's posture while they sit and talk to me. In my mind, fix the posture and you fix the problem. How many mothers feed a baby and stare at the baby? ALL OF THEM. What does that do to your shoulder, neck, and upper back? It puts these joints and muscles at a disadvantage.

I ask what is their dominant hand because mothers love to use one hand to do everything! I ask what is their dominant hip or leg because mothers love to carry a child sideways while they multitask with their dominant hand. This position is terrible for the health of the low back and hip. Due to us having two weight bearing legs the impact travels upwards to one spine. When we change the pelvic position we create abnormal stress to one side of the lower body. One hip absorbs more stress than the other hip. When we lose range of motion at the hip, the body tries to make up for the loss by utilizing the low back. Enter low back pain due to a hip dysfunction.

How often do we play with small baby clothing, snaps, fasteners, and diapers the size of our hand? How often are we holding someone while supporting a delicate soft cranium atop of a body with very minimal muscle development? How often are we taking care of another very small person for every single life need? How often are we holding baby bottles in a specific position?

Not many people repeat all these activities on a daily basis at their jobs. This is a change, for some people, a huge change. This change comes with required adaptation. Luckily the body adapts well to our usage however just like your first day at the gym, you should expect some soreness and discomfort as you adapt. Sometimes aches and pains can dissipate very quickly, at most, in a day or two.

But when they don't, never fear, Dr. Ed is here!