



HOW TO KEEP YOUR PREGNANT & MUM CLIENTS MOVING!

BROOKE TURNER

INDUSTRY INSIDER | #008

EXPRO



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Brooke Turner is the founder of Balance Fitness and Nutrition, an international health & fitness educator, speaker, published writer and mother of three with more than 13 years' experience in the health and fitness industry.

She's tertiary qualified in nutrition and exercise science, specialising in pre and post natal demographics, Brooke's mission is to educate and empower women, and fitness professionals working with women, everywhere, on safe, effective, and enjoyable exercise for pregnancy and motherhood.

Brooke has trained hundreds of women through their single, twin and even quad pregnancies, right throughout their motherhood journeys and educated fitness professionals across Australia and Asia through her online programs and educational courses.

LINKS

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WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

With over 13 years in the industry Brooke has many career highlights. Professionally they include:

Speaking at national and international health and fitness industry events such as FILEX in Australia and ExPRO in Singapore. Brooke has had over 80 articles published to both print and online publications including Australian Women's Health, resident columnist with Women's Health and Fitness magazine, STRONG magazine, Polar Global, Australian Fitness Network, House of Wellness, and many more.

The creation, certification and collaboration of her internationally certified Functional Fitness for Pregnancy and PostPartum course; the complete pre and post natal exercise package for fitness professionals working with women during pregnancy and motherhood is one of the achievements she is most proud of. Brooke has now trained over 100 fitness professionals across Australia and Asia and is excited that more and more FitPros can now educate and empower their clients on safe, effective, and enjoyable exercise for pregnancy and motherhood!

Whilst it may sound cliché, personally, becoming a mother, three times over has been Brooke's greatest achievement, and having accomplished the above whilst navigating (and juggling) motherhood, ambition, expectations, and reality. Brooke continues to push the boundaries, chase personal and professional growth, and step out of her comfort zone as she continues her mission.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR TRAINERS TO UPSKILL IN PRE AND POST NATAL EXERCISE?

It's so important to have a base level of knowledge in pregnancy and postpartum exercise when working with clients who are mothers. This may sound harsh but is true, and I see it in so many trainers. If you are working with clients or members who are mothers, regardless of how old their children are, and you don't think it's important or see value in upskilling in pre and postpartum exercise, you shouldn't be working with them.

Once women enter motherhood, they are there for life. Postpartum is for life! Often, we can think that the post natal period is when a woman's child is a baby. Yet the fact of the matter is that once a woman has carried a pregnancy and birthed a baby, either vaginally or via caesarean section, they have changed. Mentally, physically, and spiritually. They will never be the same again, nor get their 'pre baby body' back. That is not to say that a Mother cannot and will not be strong, fit, hit personal bests or love her body again, because she absolutely can and will, with the right support of a certified pre and post natal trainer.

The postpartum journey is not linear. There are many factors that impact a Mum clients mental and physical health, particularly their abdominal and pelvic health. Breastfeeding status, hormonal changes, peri and post menopause are just a few considerations that can lead to risk factors of pelvic floor dysfunction throughout their motherhood journey that may have been rehabilitated from well post baby. Regardless of how old your clients' children are, all Mums matter, and as fitness professionals we need to do better for our Mum clients.

CAN MY CLIENTS KEEP TRAINING WITH ME DURING THEIR PREGNANCY?

Pregnancy brings with it a wide range of emotions, physiological changes and sometimes confusion surrounding exercise. Maybe your clients have fallen pregnant and worried if the exercise they have been doing is safe? Can they continue to train in a way that they enjoy? Can you continue to coach in a way that you love? From what you see on the socials vs what a GP may recommend, to giving up altogether? How do your pregnant clients know what is right for them? This is where you come in! It's time to educate and empower your clients to keep moving in a way that they enjoy, but that is safe and effective for pregnancy and beyond!





But yes, the great news is that your pregnant clients CAN still train in a way that they enjoy, and they CAN still train with intensity!* (be it group fitness, CrossFit, Functional and HIIT style training). It's all relative and mostly a case that the exercise needs to be modified, not stopped.

During pregnancy there are a range of physiological changes taking place. It's important to firstly understand these physiological changes, to then understand why, when, and how certain modifications may need to be made. From increased cardiac output, oxygen uptake, and minute volume, changes in hormones, bringing with it greater joint instability and risk of injury to your client's core body temperature and the baby's developing organs and risk of miscarriage in the first trimester. There is a lot to consider and it's important to understand this to provide both you and your clients the confidence and clarity to exercise during this period.

I HEAR A LOT ABOUT PELVIC FLOOR. WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT DURING PREGNANCY?



This is one of the most important physiological changes during pregnancy and one that needs special consideration! The pelvic floor is made up of layers of muscle and other tissues, stretching like hammock from the tailbone to the pubic bone. The pelvic floor supports your bladder, uterus, and bowel. It's vital to keep pelvic floor muscles functional as they become compromised during pregnancy due to changing hormones and increased load with some serious potential consequences. A compromised pelvic floor can lead to short and/or long-term incontinence of the bowel and/or bladder, decreased support to the pelvic contents and lower back, increased risk of prolapses and impact your self-confidence and mental health. The abdominals also stretch and weaken during pregnancy, with the thinning & separating of linea alba impacting the mechanics, structure and integrity of the core and decreasing the support to the lower back and stabilising muscles.

Because of this, appropriate exercise prescription, modifications, pre-habilitation and screening are required to minimise the risk of pelvic floor dysfunction during pregnancy and maximise a woman's return to exercise journey.

WHEN CAN MY CLIENT RETURN TO EXERCISE AFTER HAVING A BABY, AND WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

The biggest misconception out there is that a client 6-week check is an all clear to return to pre pregnancy exercise. This is not the case! Woman can return to appropriate movement soon after delivery (learn what this looks like in Functional Fitness for Pregnancy and PostPartum). But a 6-week check is not enough and each woman's return to exercise journey will differ based on her pregnancy journey and unique birth experience. In the course we discuss the importance of building a relationship with a Women's Health Physiotherapist, what they do, and how to establish this, as all Mums should see a Women's Health Physio during their postpartum journey. As fitness professionals, we need to work hand in hand with these allied health professionals to maximise the health and wellbeing of our Mum clients.

Women with greater risk factors of pelvic floor dysfunction e.g. those who had a long second stage (pushing stage) of labour, 4kg+ baby, use of forceps may have a different journey to those who had a shorter second stage and an unassisted delivery, or planned caesarean section. There are a key set of guidelines and timeframes that we cover in the course, in addition to the key things that you need to be asking your postpartum clients, why you need to ask and what it means for your programming, to best support and empower your clients on their postpartum exercise journey.

At a glance, the three key steps to returning to exercise are to:

1. Build the base: rebuild pelvic floor and transverse abdominis strength and activation, stretching, posture and glute work.

2. Basic movement patterns: introduce basic movement patterns, lunge, push pull, hinge, squat, body weight movements, static holds.

3. Fun and fancy stuff: once the above has been accomplished, you can then bring in the fun and fancy stuff. This will range from each client, but it may be running, Olympic lifting, box jumps, or returning to sport. It's important to understand that the above is a cycle, regression will be required regularly as your clients evolve through their motherhood journey (which is for life, remember!).

TOP TIP TO PASS TO OUR EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

Don't underestimate the importance of further education in working with women through their pregnancy, return to exercise and motherhood journeys! All Mums Matter regardless of how old their children are, so let's not forget about the 'forgotten mums' who may in fact be into grandparenthood.

You are in a powerful position to help your Mum clients feel empowered within their bodies and exercise instead of embarrassed. To help open the conversation of pelvic floor dysfunction and help be the missing link between your clients and allied health professionals to better support your Mum clients mental and physical health. It's also not a case of go hard or go home for our pregnant and Mum clients, there is so much more to consider (learn more in the course). Ensure that your sessions are catering to serve your clients journey and needs, and not yours.

We want to keep women moving throughout every stage of life and in a way that they enjoy. You can help them achieve that! Invest in yourself to gain the confidence and clarity that you need to effectively do so and in turn you will educate and empower countless women to keep moving throughout your career and their unique journeys.

Learn more about Brooke Turner online
www.balancefitnessandnutrition.com.au



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