

# Physiotherapy and Women's Health

## Task 1: Vocabulary:

### WORDSEARCH PUZZLES

## MEDICAL

E	L	A	U	T	E	R	U	S	K	R	G	G	J
S	Q	E	R	O	O	L	L	I	V	E	R	O	
T	T	N	Y	S	M	V	U	U	D	N	A	L	A
E	S	I	R	T	I	U	A	P	N	V	E	I	N
T	R	T	E	O	S	M	A	R	E	G	P	S	N
H	O	S	G	M	E	I	M	B	Y	H	T	P	A
O	T	E	R	A	N	P	U	L	S	E	O	L	P
S	C	T	U	C	O	F	S	O	E	X	N	E	R
C	O	N	S	H	M	T	C	O	U	A	S	E	O
O	D	I	C	B	R	N	L	D	I	R	I	N	S
P	L	F	D	R	O	H	E	A	R	T	L	H	T
E	L	O	R	A	H	U	I	N	J	E	C	T	A
U	N	J	U	I	T	O	L	C	X	R	A	Y	T
P	R	E	G	N	A	N	T	U	B	Y	O	N	E

artery; blood; brain; clot; doctor; drug; flu; heart; hormone; inject; intestine;  
kidney; liver; lung; muscle; ovary; ovum; pain; pregnant; prostate; pulse;  
spleen; stethoscope, stomach; surgery; tonsil; uterus; vein; x-ray;

(from ESL English)

### Task 2:

Look at the groups of words and think of the way they are related:

*artery – blood – vein – lung*

*brain – x-ray – doctor – surgery*

*ovary – ovum – pregnant - uterus*

Look at the list in Task 1 above and think of other combinations and associations.

### Task 3 Before you read:

*Why do pregnant women experience discomfort?*

*What are their most frequent problems?*

*Do you know any methods suitable for pregnant women?*

### Scan the text and find the following:

- powerful effect \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 1)
- process of giving birth \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 1)
- improved \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 2)
- to carry out a programme \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 2)
- a slight stinging or uncomfortable feeling \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 2)
- complete assessment \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 3)
- to include sth. \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 3)
- period after childbirth \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 4)
- a surgical procedure performed to help the woman deliver the baby \_\_\_\_\_

### Find antonyms in the text:

increase \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 1)

slow down \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 1)

balance \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 2)

weakness \_\_\_\_\_ (par. 2)

### Check the words in bold – can you guess their meaning?

## Physiotherapy, pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum

1 Pregnancy is a time that can have a great impact on the ability of a woman to function on a daily basis. Many physical and hormonal changes are responsible for making women feel at times quite uncomfortable during the pregnancy process. However, women do not have to accept that these feelings of **discomfort** are unmanageable. Physicians recognise that physical therapy can improve women's health during pregnancy by reducing discomfort, preparing the body for delivery and also to accelerate the recovery process after the birth of the baby.

2 Physical therapy is able to help the body to cope with musculature, circulatory, mobility, respiratory and circulatory **issues**. The entire nervous system function can be greatly enhanced by using certain physiotherapy techniques to improve its function. It is estimated that up to 25% of women will experience some form or **temporary disablement** because of the changes in the body during pregnancy and other women will experience general discomfort **to varying degrees**. By implementing a regular physiotherapy program as part of your pregnancy care regime you may be able to treat problems associated with lower back pain, neck and head pain, pain in the hamstrings due to the feet becoming flatter, nerve compression symptoms such as tingling sensations in the arms, and bladder control problems. A physiotherapy program can be **tailored** specifically for each woman's individual needs.

3 A thorough evaluation is necessary before starting an effective program, in order to determine the best exercises that will be **well suited to** the woman. These exercises are intended to decrease joint pain, help to correct muscle imbalances and build strength, and to increase the range of the body's overall motion and functionality. It is recommended that women attend between four to six instructional sessions in order to learn how to use and incorporate the techniques into their daily exercise or care regime. The session should focus on specific movements and exercises to reduce and manage pain effectively and to assist in development of healthy **postural alignment** and balance of the body. Particular techniques are designed to enhance flexibility in the soft tissues and joints.

4 There are a variety of techniques that can be used for mental and physical relaxation. Relaxation exercises are just as important as those that help to increase strength and flexibility. Therapists can also fit the woman with **braces** and **orthotics** that will help to provide support for the lower back if necessary. Positions for sleeping may be advised, if normal sleeping routines have been **disturbed**. This is also a common problem for pregnant women. After the birth of the baby, rehabilitation can be accelerated by incorporating postpartum physiotherapy techniques into the regular exercise program. The use of physiotherapy, combined with the **professional guidance** and advice of the practitioner can definitely help to make pregnancy and recovery more enjoyable. The benefits gained through the use of physiotherapy will be extended to the baby, if a mother is feeling more happy and comfortable.

<http://www.eumom.ie/Pregnancy/Physio-for-Pregnant-Women.aspx>

**Below is a summary of some changes that may occur during pregnancy:**

First Trimester: Low back pain

Second Trimester: Diastasis Recti, low back pain

Third Trimester: Low back pain, Frequent urination, Back pain, Leg edema, Fatigue, Shortness of breath, Constipation

**Post-Partum Care:**

After childbirth, women should have a follow up with a physical therapist in order to put back on a proper exercise and stretching program. Some women notice changes after childbirth that might have not been present during pregnancy. Again, these discomforts can be treated.

- Back pain
- Diastasis recti
- Scarring
- C-Section, episiotomy, or perineal tear
- Pelvic floor weakness
- Prolapse
- Urinary or faecal incontinence
- Pelvic pain

**Physical Therapy Treatment Includes:**

- Soft tissue mobilization, myofascial release, deep tissue massage
- Muscle energy techniques
- Therapeutic exercise
- Posture, lifting techniques and biomechanics

<http://www.beyondbasicsphysicaltherapy.com/childbearing.shtml>

**Task 4 After reading – Answer the questions:**

How can a physiotherapist help a woman prepare for childbirth?

Which muscles should be trained?

What should be done after childbirth?

What problems should be solved in the post-partum period?

### **Task 5 Discuss: Recommended postnatal exercise:**

Ligaments and joints will be loose for at least three months following the birth, so high impact exercises or sports that require rapid direction changes should be avoided. Vigorous stretching should be avoided too.

In the light of the above advice, what types of exercise would you recommend?

### **Task 6 Discuss: What problem is the following treatment aimed at?**

1. postural evaluation and correction, body mechanics, myofascial release, deep tissue massage, stretching, strengthening

2. posturing, breathing mechanics, and myofascial release. We use pregnancy tables and pillows to make treatment sessions as comfortable as possible.

### **See also:**

Mojzis method at <http://www.mojzis-methods.com/>

Myofascial release at

[http://www.myofascialrelease.com/fascia\\_message/public/whatis\\_myofascial\\_release.asp](http://www.myofascialrelease.com/fascia_message/public/whatis_myofascial_release.asp)

### **Task 7 Listening**

#### **Top tips for a healthy back in pregnancy**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcHPec5FxB8> (3.52-6.10)

#### **Check the vocabulary used by the therapist:**

To stiffen

To tilt forward

To counterbalance

Tailbone

To tuck

Growing bump

Likely to fall

**Listen and note down the main tips for a healthy back in pregnancy.**

**Describe the changes in the lower back during pregnancy.**