

## Book reviews

### **The Complete Guide to Postnatal Fitness, 3rd edn**

By Judy DiFiore

A & C Black Publishing, London, 2010, 256 pages, paperback, £18.99

ISBN 978-1-4081-2455-0

This well-presented book is aimed at exercise instructors, personal trainers, therapists and trainees who work with postnatal women either individually or in groups. *The Complete Guide to Postnatal Fitness* is written in the style of a reference work and the text is divided into three main sections.

Part One covers anatomy and physiology during pregnancy, and describes the changes that take place at this time. The information is presented clearly and simply, and diagrams and photographs are used to enhance the text. Particular attention is given to the transversus abdominis and pelvic floor muscles (PFMs), and the importance of lumbopelvic stability. Postnatal complications are also covered in this section, and I was impressed with the range of musculoskeletal conditions that are described briefly but with accuracy, including pelvic girdle pain (PGP), coccyx pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, pelvic floor dysfunction, dia-

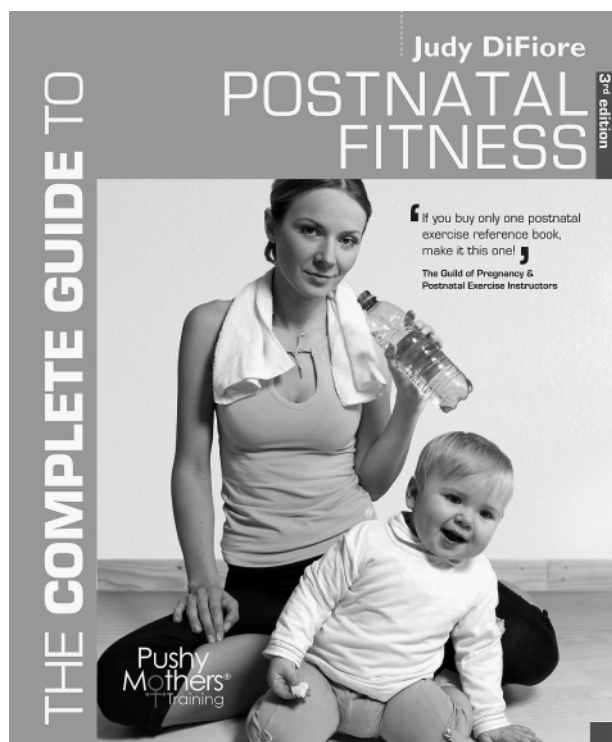
stasis recti, perineal trauma, prolapse and several other postnatal problems. In all cases, simple advice is given on how to manage the problem, which always includes referring the woman to the relevant qualified professional for a more detailed assessment.

The next section deals with graduated exercises, which are mostly 'Pilates-based' in style. The focus is firmly on transversus abdominis and PFM activation, and lumbopelvic stability. These exercises are not particularly new, but the emphasis on quality and ensuring correct muscle recruitment before progressing is made very clear, which is pleasing to see. The progressions are gentle and, in the early stages, mostly symmetrical in style. The exercises are clearly described and backed up with good photographs to illustrate the position, making the directions easy to follow. The author points out that some exercises (mostly asymmetrical ones) may cause discomfort to women recovering from PGP. I feel that these warnings could go further, and would suggest that, if the movements cause significant discomfort and pain, the mothers should stop the exercise and seek a professional evaluation. However, overall, the cautionary notes are clear and adequate. There are useful bullet-point summaries at the end of each chapter. There are also clear 'warning boxes' throughout the book that highlight any extra considerations which need to be taken into account with regard to an exercise.

Part Three covers the planning, management, teaching and evaluation of a variety of different styles of postnatal classes, from water and land classes to buggy workouts and more. This section includes advice on how to plan and market your postnatal class. I was pleased to see that it also has a good discussion of relaxation that mentions Laura Mitchell's relaxation method.

*The Complete Guide to Postnatal Fitness* ends with an appendix containing lifestyle advice. This is well presented and useful, but I would make one small amendment to the breast-feeding position: the elbow and forearm should be fully supported to reduce tension through the arm, shoulder and neck.

Overall, I would recommend this book to anyone who is working with postnatal mothers



either on an individual basis or in postnatal classes. It provides a very useful foundation of basic information and advice, and contains up-to-date references should you wish to read further. *The Complete Guide to Postnatal Fitness* has a clear and simple style, a logical layout and describes a safe progression of exercises, but because of the amount of detail it includes, the book may be less suitable for postnatal mothers to use on their own.

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### **Hysterectomy, Vaginal Repair, and Surgery for Stress Incontinence, 6th edn**

By Sally Haslett, Molly Jennings, Hilary Walsgrove & Wendy Weatheritt

Beaconsfield Publishers, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, 2010, 48 pages, paperback, £5.95  
ISBN 978-0-906584-62-0

This little book has been a regular addition to women's health physiotherapy advice since it was first published in 1984. It is written in simple, straightforward language and is well illustrated. The authors give a brief explanation of female anatomy, describe the pathology associated with hysterectomy and its repair, and then provide advice on a wide range of issues, such as returning to work, exercise, sport and fitness.

The sixth edition of *Hysterectomy, Vaginal Repair, and Surgery for Stress Incontinence* has been brought up to date with current techniques, but I would have liked to have seen more on the prevention of further complications in the posterior compartment of the pelvic floor through dietary advice, and the promotion of a greater understanding of the absolute need to avoid constipation and straining. No mention is made of intermittent self-catheterization, which is

# **Hysterectomy, Vaginal Repair, and Surgery for Stress Incontinence**

SIXTH EDITION

This booklet contains information that will help you and your family prepare for your operation, and then help you get back to normal as quickly as possible afterwards.

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Hilary Walsgrove & Wendy Weatheritt

employed routinely in some units in connection with bladder neck surgery, and the increasing use of laparoscopic surgery is touched on only briefly. The exercise section could usefully have been expanded to take greater account of the fact that this form of surgery is often done on athletic and very active women, many of whom may have some degree of hypermobility.

Nevertheless, *Hysterectomy, Vaginal Repair, and Surgery for Stress Incontinence* remains a valuable and reasonably priced book.

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