

Diastasis Recti

A beginners guide to understanding DR





Let's bust some myths:

Diastasis Recti is a hot topic in the pregnancy & postpartum world.

Many trainers claim to have **the** secret exercise programme to close the gap and flatten one's tummy. However, this simply is false advertising.

There is no "one size fits all" approach.

There are no "off limit" exercises.

There are no "Diastasis safe" exercises.

A flat tummy does NOT always = a strong tummy.

And having a Diastasis does NOT = weakness.



Not all Diastasis' are created equal



What is Diastasis Recti?

It is the process by which the connective tissue down the midline of the abdomen (the Linea Alba), widens and thins to accommodate a growing baby.

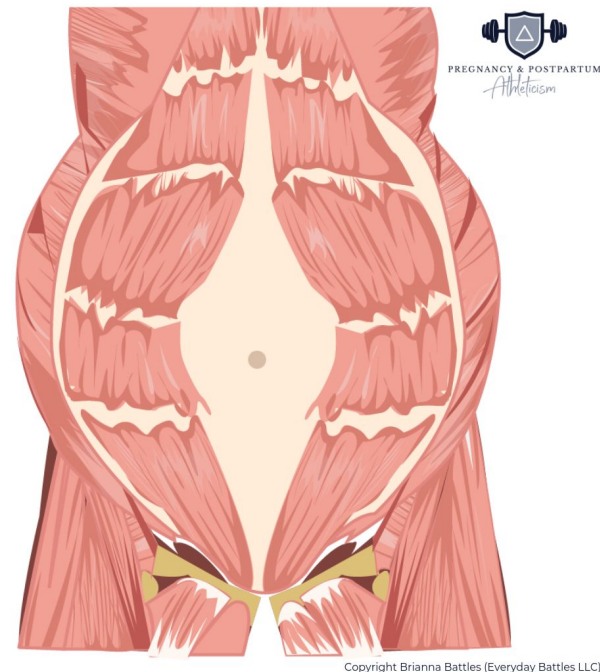
As a result, the “6-pack” muscles move further apart.

This “gap” is measured in centimeters or by finger width.

- Anything 2cm or below is within a normal range.
- Anything above is not necessarily bad, but may require more intentional rehabbing.

Research is beginning to show that the size of the gap should not be the main focus.

Rather the integrity of the tissue and the ability to create tension along the midline should be prioritised.



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“Your aesthetics do not determine your athletics” - Inemesit Graham



Can Diastasis Recti be prevented?

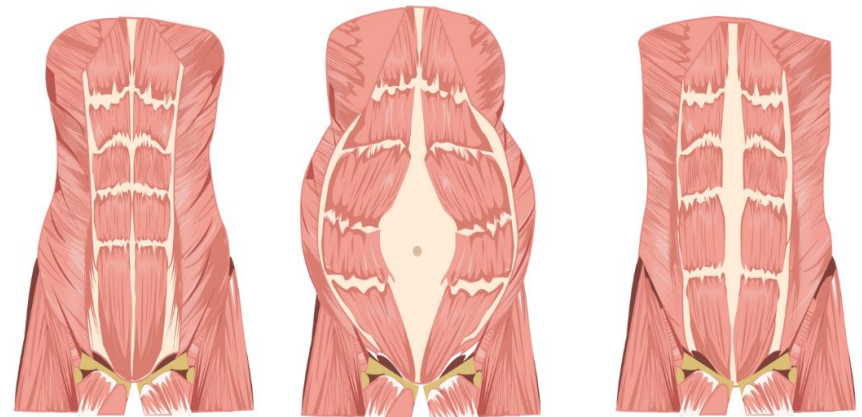
In short, no. In fact, it is essential.

Many factors influence the severity, including:

- Genetics, size and position of baby, exercise & movement tendencies and # of pregnancies to name a few

Although a Diastasis cannot be prevented during pregnancy, you can **support** your core with:

- Deep core engagement exercises
- Breath work
- Pressure management strategies



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Diastasis Recti should not be ignored or feared.



Pregnancy Considerations (Prehab)

As pregnancy progresses, the core becomes increasingly stressed.

Intra abdominal pressure (IAP) management is key to supporting & preserving your core.

Exercise should be adjusted to limit excess IAP and decrease outward pressure on the Linea Alba.

- When looking to do an exercise, ask yourself what is the risk vs reward? Does this support the long term health of my core/pelvic floor?
- If it is a movement you cannot avoid (such as lifting a heavy toddler), then it is important to use things such as your breath, body positioning and tension to help support your core through the movement.
- Working with a Women's Health Physiotherapist or a Qualified Perinatal PT can help you best decide what is and what isn't best for YOUR body, as well as what strategies will be helpful for YOU.



“Intention now for intensity later” - Brianna Battles



Postpartum Considerations (Rehab)

Your rehab journey begins by allowing the core to heal. Rest is always the priority.

Intentional breath work paired with basic core connection exercises can begin before your 6 week check - but again, rest should be the priority.

- *Please note that this should only be done under the guidance of a Women's Health Physiotherapist and/or a Qualified Perinatal trainer.*

Once cleared for exercise by your provider, you can then progress to more functional movements with focus on connection to core/pelvic floor. This begins to challenge and load the abdominal wall.

You must not fear movement, however it must be done progressively.

- If you have reached a plateau in your rehab, it may be time to change things up and/or progress your movements.



**“The only thing that will prevent progress is not progressing”
- Munira Hudani, PT**



Doming does not always = Diastasis

Doming or coning of the abdomen is visual feedback of how pressure is being managed and distributed throughout your abdomen.

This outward pressure means the tissue along the midline is not able to create enough tension to withstand the demands being placed upon it.

It is possible to perform the same movement and reduce the doming or coning by simply adjusting your strategy. (see photo)



Unmanaged pressure

Managed pressure with proper breathing and core engagement strategies executed

The goal is to walk the line between managing doming or coning (pressure) while still progressively challenging the core as an entire unit.



Awareness is key

The Facts

“Success” looks different on every core. Just because something worked for one person, does not mean it will work for you.

The “gap” may never fully close, however your core can still be strong.

Your body

Take control and learn to understand your bodies cues.

Your options

Women's Health Physiotherapy
Pregnancy & Postnatal Fitness coaching
Surgery as a last resort

Free Resources:

[Munira Hudani, PT - Top 10 reasons why your DR is not improving and what to do](#)

[The Practice Brave Podcast - DR & the female athlete with Lisa Ryan](#)

[Lisa Ryan's - Great resource if you are considering surgery](#)

Instagram Recommendations:

@mummy_fitness, @munirahudanipt,
@pregnant.postpartum.athlete, @brianna.battles

Further questions? Don't hesitate to reach out.