

A quest for postnatal fitness

By roving reporter Sarah Husselmann

With each new celebrity mum we witness an even quicker snapping back into shape. J-Lo apparently hired a team of nutritionists and trainers to help her lose the baby weight. Heidi Klum was back on the catwalk two months after having her second child. No pressure for us regular mums then?! But whilst celebrities can afford the time and money required to speedily recapture their pre-baby body, most of us simply don't have the scope for a quick solution.

Of course, finding the time and motivation for regular exercise is a challenge. I can't attend a gym regularly enough to justify the fees so have been looking for postnatal fitness options that compliment my increasing hectic life...hopefully there will be something here to inspire you to get out there, strut your stuff and feel good!

Along with eight other mums and babies, I attended **Power Pramming** run by Liz Stuart on Clapham Common. We started with a brisk walk to some gravel pitches close to the bandstand where we did further warm up exercises before some jogging and ball throwing. Liz then provided resistance bands so that we could work on our upper-bodies. After another brisk walk we returned to the bandstand where we did step ups onto the benches before doing floor exercises. The work out was comprehensive and Liz regularly reminded us how hard to push ourselves depending on how recently babe had arrived. I left feeling revived and invigorated, having re-discovered muscles left idle during my pregnancy. Power Pramming is great because there's no need for childcare and as it's outside it's a good chance for baby to get some fresh air too! **Buggyfit** run very similar classes at a number of locations in South West London.

If you're not Power Pramming why not give **Powertoning** a try? I visited **Powertone Studios** in Battersea. There are also studios in Fulham and Chelsea. Powertoning sessions use Power Plates and only last 25 minutes so fitting a session in around baby isn't too tricky. During the session you hold a number of poses on the vibrating plate and if you think you're in for an easy ride, think again! Thirty seconds into my first squat my thighs were burning as much as they would at the end of my third repetition at the gym. The appeal of powertoning is the convenience – sessions are quick and Powertone Studios are happy for Mums to take babies along with them during off-peak times. My little man is quite content listening to the buzz of the machines and looking at the lights and mirrors.

I have attended **Pilates** on and off for years - the classes I attend at **The Lavender Heal** in SW11 run by Sally Marshall are excellent and I leave feeling so relaxed that I glide home – I thoroughly recommend it. There are Pilates classes you can attend with baby at **The Vitality Centre**, SW18 and **Gillian Greenwood**, "London's top Pilates therapist and well-being guru" (The London Paper) is based in South West London and runs classes in Fulham, Chelsea and Kensington.

Latino Bambino is a slightly more upbeat way to keep fit and a fantastic cardiovascular workout. The session combines dance moves with more common aerobic steps, whilst mums carry babies in slings or baby carriers (you can take your own or use those provided). When I attended, my son had just reached 14 lbs and I could feel the weight as my legs worked through the different dance steps. Latino Bambino is the most fun workout I've had in some time – after five minutes I found myself grinning from ear to ear and the happy feeling lasted all day. On the one hand the ridiculousness of doing salsa aerobics with baby initially seems so silly it brings a smile to your face and then my ineptitude at following the steps was just laughable! I worked up quite a sweat and ached the next day so it was 45 minutes well spent. All the babies seemed to love it and many, including mine, were sound asleep by the end of the session.



Pilates Gillian Greenwood

Last up on my quest for postnatal perfection, I've been **swimming** at my local leisure centre – possibly one of the more economical ways of getting fit. Don't forget that many of our centres offer crèche facilities for extremely reasonable prices and swimming briskly for just 30 minutes gives a great all over work out so you won't be leaving baby for long.

I'm sure it goes without saying that all of this exercise is only recommended after your 6 week check-up and if your GP doesn't check it, it's worth asking your instructor to check that your abdominal muscles have joined up again before starting Pilates. After all this activity, I'm off to put my feet up with a cup of tea and a biscuit...surely I've earned it!?



Latino Bambino

Fact File

•Power Pramming

07976 778413 www.powerpramming.co.uk
£6.50 for drop in pay as you go
£30 for a pre paid block of 5 - you get 7 weeks to use this up
£50 for a pre paid block of 10 - you get 3 months to use this up. There is no need to book

See also www.buggyfit.co.uk for a number of additional locations across South West London

£7 for a drop in session

5 class deal for £25

10 classes for £45

•Pilates

The Lavender Heal, 189 Lavender Hill, SW11 5TB 020 7801 0199
www.lavenderheal.co.uk
Classes run several evenings a week and cost £72 for 6 sessions.

•The Vitality Centre

155-156 Merton Road, SW18 5EQ
www.vitality-centre.com
Pilates for New Mums, Wednesday 12:00 – 13:00

Gillian Greenwood

020 7385 3577 www.gilliangreenwood.com

•Powertone

www.powertonestudios.com
Battersea, 5 Cotswold Mews, SW11 3RA
020 7228 8333
Credit Crunch Offer for all readers: £99 for 10 Sessions (between 3:00-5:00pm Monday to Friday)
Chelsea, 1st Floor, Kings Walk Mall, SW3 4TR
020 7584 4911
Fulham, 2 Elysium Gate, 126-128 New Kings Road, SW6 4LZ 020 7731 1559

•Latino Bambino

Classes at The Vitality Centre listed above
07961 838349 www.latinobambino.co.uk