

back to the gym

It's easier when
your baby is
welcome, too

writer: **charlotte livingston**

Are you one of those enviable few who quickly—and practically without effort—returns to her pre-pregnant, fit-and-fantastic body mere months after giving birth? No? Then we bet you're feeling some pressure to get (back) to a gym as soon as possible. Thankfully, now, more than ever, local gyms and fitness centers are welcoming new mothers—and their babies—with open arms.

Many postpartum moms find that exercising after giving birth not only trims away their extra weight, it also increases their morale. Of course, you should check with your doctor following childbirth to make sure that your body is indeed ready for exercise. But you already know that.

It's widely known that the Jewish Community Center offers a top nursery program. For select hours each day, they also offer onsite babysitting for your child—for a nominal cost—while you work out, even if your baby isn't enrolled in their program. Brian Soileau, Director of Health and Physical Education, was glad to provide a long list of classes offered at the center, including yoga, Pilates, aerobics and swimming. He mentioned two that particularly appeal to new mothers: circuit training and water aerobics. Circuit training, he explained, is a great way for new moms to get back into the routine of working out because it isn't as strenuous as other traditional work out routines. Water aerobics is good for new moms for the same reason, and is available when the pool is open, from May through September.

Another very popular, baby-friendly fitness facility is Elmwood Fitness Center. The facility is open nearly all day, every day which is especially appreciated by working parents. Courtney Frankowski, mother of five-year-old Bella, and one-and-a-half-year-old Sophie, was very pleased with the childcare facility. As a parent, she noticed the details, such as a separate space for infants, as well as indoor and outdoor activities for older children.

As Shelly Edney, mother of three-year-old Mallory and seven-year-old Jordan, will tell you, "having a gym membership is a mom's only break, and a true sanity saver." Thankfully, Pelican Athletic Club in Mandeville provides a sitter service, and even a once a month "date night" for parents, which allows parents to drop their children off for up to four hours. The club offers many fitness classes, swimming pools, physical therapy and even a spa.

Children

ages six months and older are welcome, and up to two hours of childcare are offered for free every day with a family membership.

The Reily Student Recreation Center at Tulane University offers babysitting for a very reasonable rate (\$1.50 per half hour) during specific hours during the week. This service is offered for babies six months or older (though the staff is not required to change diapers, so you'll want to check in with your

“Having a gym membership is a mom's only break, and a true sanity saver.”


baby periodically if that's a concern). A membership to Reily will give you access to a variety of fitness classes, weight training, and even a swimming pool.

An alternative to traditional gyms is a yoga studio. After sleepless nights and frenzied days, a new mom might really enjoy a relaxing yoga session. Wild Lotus Yoga, which is located Uptown, offers a special class designed for



new mothers and their infants (from six weeks to crawling). Mothers, while working on both strength and flexibility, are encouraged to relax and connect with their new babies during their Postnatal Yoga classes. Instructor Jennifer Teague, mother of ten month old and midway through her second pregnancy, describes this class as one that truly focuses on the needs of new mothers. "We work on rehabilitating the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles." Interaction with your new baby is incorporated into the class, with moms touching and tickling their babies in between moving from pose to pose, and even using their babies as added weights during some poses and stretches.

And, if you just cannot commit to going to a gym, and are looking for flexibility in scheduling physical activity with your new baby, you might consider personal sessions with Devin Tournillon. A mother of two, and six months pregnant herself, Devin is a certified personal trainer who also conducts lifestyle management. She loves working with new moms, and is brimming with ideas for ways to work appropriate exercise into your new (more hectic than you ever imagined) routine. She is able to gear workouts to her clients' needs, and enjoys incorporating exercising with your baby—strollers are utilized for stretching, and babies are turned into weights.

Devin notes that the biggest challenge is just getting started. She wants new moms to know that they just need to find a way to fit 30 minutes of exercise into their day, every day, to see the best results. Thankfully, in New Orleans, it's easier than ever to make that happen. 



L to R- June Friend Evins and older brother Sam, along with Amelie Aluise, are entertained in the JCC babysitting room by sitter Treal Clare, while their mothers workout in class.



For more information on the programs highlighted in this article, including the hours that childcare is offered, please check out the following:

Jewish Community Center. Uptown Campus (504) 897.0143; Metairie Campus (504) 887-5158.

Elmwood Fitness Center. (504) 733.1600.

Pelican Athletic Club, Mandeville. (985) 626.3706, or visit www.thepac.com.

The Reily Student Recreation Center at Tulane University. (504) 865.5242, or visit www.reilycenter.com.

Wild Lotus Yoga. (504) 899.0047. The Postnatal yoga class is currently being offered on Thursday from 11 a.m. until noon. Call for more information.

Devin Tournillon, certified personal trainer. (504) 343.8480.

JCC²⁰⁰⁷

NEW ORLEANS

camp dates: JUNE 11 - AUGUST 3

camp registration day:

MARCH 8, 4:00PM - 7:00PM

UPTOWN: 5342 ST. CHARLES AVE., 504-897-0143

METAIRIE: 3747 WEST ESPLANADE AVE., 504-887-5158

www.nojcc.com

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL



summer camp

PickleBerry
Best Kept Secret in Town!

Pickleberry sells fine quality smocked and hand embroidered items at wholesale prices!

Monogramming Available

We do consignment, too!

889-2525 - 6601 Veterans Blvd
(across from TJ Max)