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Exercise Can Help Relieve Back Pain For New Moms

Kayti Lathrop is one busy mom. With three babies under age 5, she is constantly lifting and moving and chasing after her children, Kaya, Tierra and Tupelo.

All that schlepping has left Lathrop in pain and led to, "A dull, low backache, but then every once and a while I get the shooting pains that go down my leg, which is sciatica," said Lathrop.

It turns out that sciatica is a very common problem for new moms. It starts with stretching of the abdominal muscles during pregnancy. The elongated muscles are key for supporting the spine and preventing back pain after birth.

"The hormones that are released during childbirth are able to permit the baby to come out, relax the muscles, they relax the ligaments and they also relax the spine, too," said Dr. Andrew Casden, of the Beth Israel Spine Center.

So what can be done about the pain? The first step is to make even a little time to start getting back into shape -- some aerobic work to build endurance and then some abdominal exercises, like crunches, to rebuild stomach muscles.

Stretching also helps, because hamstrings and back muscles are probably all out of balance, pulling on spine and pelvis in ways that just make everything hurt.

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