





### **What is the role of stabilizing muscles post-labour?**

"They help the hips remain stable and are connected to the pelvic girdle. Since relaxin, the pregnancy hormone, makes ligaments more supple, and given the baby's weight, it becomes crucial that we protect the pelvic girdle in order to **avoid back injuries**. Essentrics strengthens the hips, abdominal muscles and the back, and stabilizes them at the core. That way, it becomes easier to stand up straight, and pain is avoided."

### **What are the most frequent injuries new mothers sustain?**

"Back pain, since they are constantly leaning forward, and repeating the same movements every day. Also, the weakening of the pelvic girdle can create incontinence. In order to avoid that, during the pregnancy, we strengthen the abs and glutes by doing moderate and controlled leg raises and *pliés* (without opening the hips too much). But be advised: during your pregnancy, abdominal muscles open up. If you begin exercising those muscles too soon after giving birth, you can injure yourself in addition to opening them up even more. It is best to consult your doctor before starting to work them out again."

### ***About the expert***

*Ripas has been athletic all her life, and she has been teaching Essentrics in Montreal for seven years now. Since she was already quite active, she has kept working out as recommended by her doctor. She gradually began training again after giving birth, and got her pre-baby body back in a matter of weeks. Overall, she's a very inspiring mother, and a testament to the benefits of Essentrics on the body. She stars in the Essentrics Pregnancy Workout DVD, available to order for \$19.95 [here](#).*