



Weekly
**physical activity
recommendation**
after delivery



Regular physical activity

- improves physical fitness and increases energy
- boosts mood and supports mental well-being
- helps to return to pre-pregnancy weight.

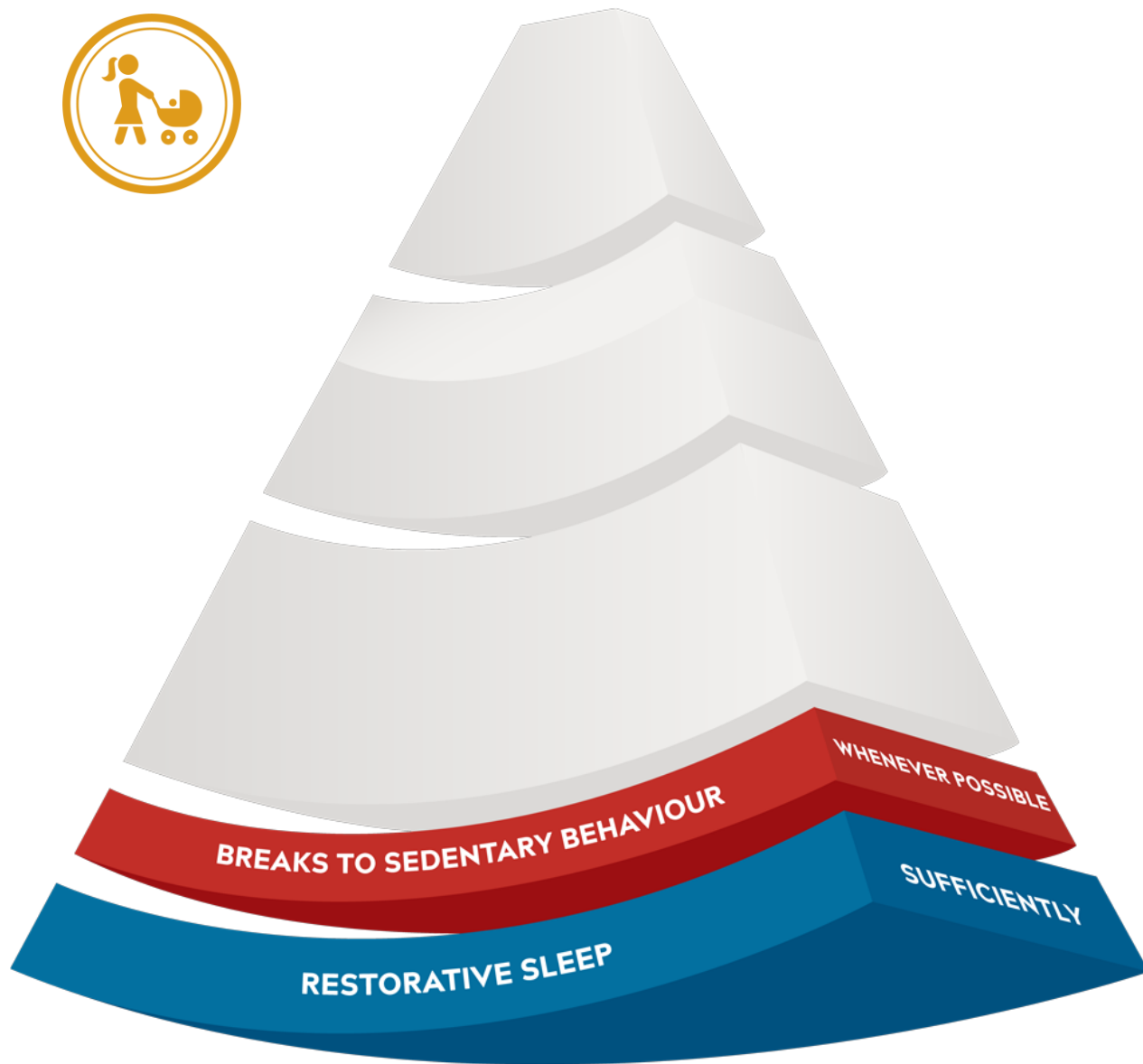


BOOSTING MOOD during postpartum



Restorative sleep sufficiently

- During sleep, your brain structures your thoughts and helps you to recover from daily stress.
- Learn to recognise the amount of sleep that you need and try to match your sleeping habits with your baby's sleep pattern.



Breaks to sedentary behaviour whenever possible

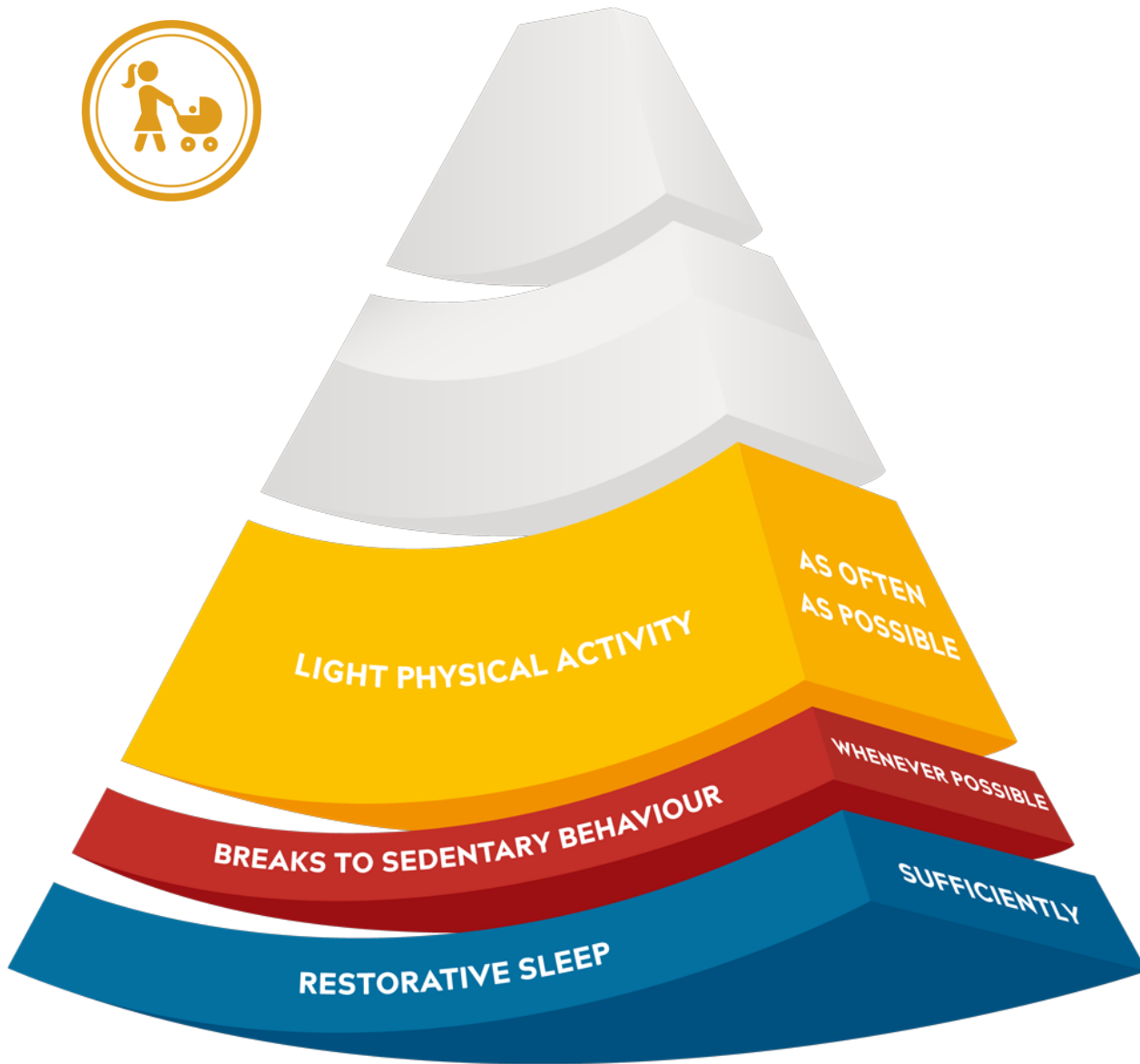
Breaks

- improve blood circulation
- activate muscles
- and reduce strain on your body.

Set yourself screen time limits and decide which TV programmes you wish to watch.

A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing sunglasses and a light blue button-down shirt, is pushing a white stroller on a paved path in a park. The path is lined with trees and a chain-link fence in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**Utilise everyday opportunities
to be physically active**



Light physical activity as often as possible

Every step counts.

Utilise:

- household chores
- shopping trips
- outdoor activities with your family
- and other daily activities.

Remember to also rest during the day.

A person with short blonde hair, wearing a bright red jacket and blue shorts, is seen from behind, pushing a black stroller on a dirt path. The path is covered with fallen leaves. The background is a forest with trees showing autumn foliage in shades of yellow and orange. The scene is captured in a cinematic style with soft lighting.

How much
physical activity is good for you?



Moderate physical activity

at least 2 h 30 min per week

All activity that increases your heart rate counts.

Physical activity is moderate if you are able to talk despite shortness of breath.

OR



Vigorous physical activity

at least 1 h 15 min per week

You will achieve the same health benefits in a shorter time when you increase the intensity of your activity.

Physical activity is vigorous if talking is difficult due to shortness of breath.

IN ADDITION



Muscle strengthening and balance activities

at least twice a week

Use your muscles and challenge your balance more than normally.

Choose your way, e.g. weight training, stair climbing, group exercise.



Adapt to your resources

Even short bouts of physical activity count.



When can you start physical activity?

- Recovering from delivery is different for each individual – you can start light physical activity as soon as you feel ready to do so.
- Listen to your body and gradually increase the amount and intensity of physical activity.
- If you are uncertain, do not hesitate to consult your nurse or doctor.



What kind of physical activity is suitable? 1/3

- Start pelvic floor muscle training right after delivery – it prevents possible urinary incontinence.
- Further advice is provided by e.g. your maternity care and the physiotherapist of your local health centre.
- Instructions on pelvic floor muscle exercises are available in Finnish at www.kaypahoito.fi



What kind of physical activity is suitable? 2/3

- Choose activities that you find safe and familiar, e.g. workout sessions with your baby or pram walking.
- In the beginning, avoid physical activities that include intense jumps or rapid changes of direction, because your ligaments might have loosened due to hormonal changes.



What kind of physical activity is suitable? 3/3

- You may return to running 3 months after delivery at the earliest.
- Before graded return you should not have any symptoms of pelvic floor weakness in everyday activities or running attempts.



Physical activity and breastfeeding

- Drink enough fluids during physical activity.
- Physical activity of moderate intensity does not affect the quantity or quality of breast milk, the ability to breastfeed or the baby's growth.
- The best time for breastfeeding is before physical activity – the breasts become lighter and physical activity is more comfortable.



**By being physically active
you support both your own and
your baby's well-being.**





Sources

2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee. 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018.

Bø K, Artal R, Bakarat R ym. Exercise and pregnancy in recreational and elite athletes: 2016/2017 evidence summary from the IOC expert group meeting, Lausanne. Part 5. Recommendations for health professionals and active women. Br J Sports Med 2018;52:1080-1085.

DiPietro L, Evenson KR, Bloodgood B ym. Benefits of physical activity during pregnancy and postpartum: An umbrella review. Med Sci Sports Exerc 2019;51:1292-1302.

Duodecim Terveyskirjasto. Raskaus ja liikunta. Lääkärikirja Duodecim 28.9.2020, www.terveyskirjasto.fi

Donnelly GM, Rankin A, Mills H ym. Infographic. Guidance for medical, health and fitness professionals to support women in returning to running postnatally. Br J Sports Med 2020;54:114-115.

Luoto R. Liikuntasuosituksset raskauden aikana. Duodecim 2019;135(21):2079-2084.

Meah VL, Davies GA, Davenport MH. Why can't I exercise during pregnancy? Time to revisit medical 'absolute' and 'relative' contraindications: systematic review of evidence of harm and a call to action. Br J Sports Med 2020;54:1395-1404.

Mottola MF, Davenport MH, Ruchat S-M ym. 2019 Canadian guideline for physical activity throughout pregnancy. Br J Sports Med 2018;52:1339-1346.

Mottola MF, Nagpal TS, Bgeginski R ym. Is supine exercise associated with adverse maternal and fetal outcomes? A systematic review. Br J Sports Med 2019;53:82-89.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Physical activity and exercise during pregnancy and the postpartum period. ACOG Committee Opinion No. 804. Obstetrics & Gynecology 2020;135:e178-188.



Thank you!

ukkinstituutti.fi/en

 UKK Institute