The following advice applies to all new mothers whether you have given birth vaginally or by caesarean section. It includes a safe and effective set of exercises and some practical advice to aid your recovery including:

- being comfortable after your delivery
- moving easily around the ward and at home with your baby
- exercising the abdominal and pelvic floor muscles
- starting to get back to normal and finding your previous level of fitness

After you have given birth, it is natural that you will want to give your baby lots of attention. Even so, it is important to take a little time for yourself. Although you cannot expect to return to full pre-pregnancy fitness immediately, there is a lot you can do now to help get yourself back into shape. By regaining your fitness, you will feel good and have more energy – and possibly avoid problems later.

If you need more advice after reading the booklet, please contact your local women’s health physiotherapist (see page 13).

**Comfort after your delivery**
(If you have had a caesarean delivery please also see page 5)

**Rest**
After having your baby it is vital to have sufficient rest to recover. It may be helpful to use a method of relaxation and sleep whilst your baby sleeps.

**Comfortable resting positions**
Try resting or sleeping in the positions indicated in the pictures. Use pillows to provide support as shown.

Lying on your side can be particularly comfortable if you have had stitches in your abdomen or bottom, or if you have piles.

**To get into bed:**
Stand with the back of your knees against the bed. Support your abdomen with one hand and put the other hand on the bed behind you. Bend forwards slowly as you sit on the bed. Then lower your head and shoulders sideways down onto the pillow, keeping your knees bent and together, lift your legs up at the same time.

If sitting is uncomfortable you can get into bed by kneeling on the bed and then lowering yourself down onto your side.

**To turn over in bed:**
Bend both knees, one at a time, keeping your feet on the bed. Support the abdomen with your hand especially if you have had a caesarean delivery. Make sure that you move your shoulders and knees at the same time as you roll onto your side.

**To get out of bed:**
From lying on your side as above, push through your arms to lift your head and trunk up, and at the same time allow your feet to lower over the side of the bed, down to the floor. Sit on the side of the bed for a few moments, and then stand up by leaning forwards and pushing up with your hands and legs. Try not to stoop, stand tall.

**Other Headings...**
Sitting and feeding
Activity in the early days after delivery
Caesarean delivery
Exercises
Getting back to normal