

# EuropeActive 'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning Qualification

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## I. Executive Summary

This document refers to the EuropeActive Sector Qualification Framework. It is a description of essential knowledge, skills, responsibility, and autonomy, written as Learning Outcomes, required to work in the European Fitness and Physical Activity Sector as a professional qualified in the field of postpartum exercise.

This 'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning (LLL) Qualification is a response to the global trend of the promotion of physical activity in women after childbirth. Scientific research from the last 30 years proves that exercising during postpartum leads to many health benefits for women, both in physiological and psychological aspects (1, 2). The short-term benefits of postpartum physical activity and exercise include, inter alia, improvement of cardiorespiratory fitness and other fitness components, i.e., muscular fitness and, body composition (3, 4). Physical activity and exercise may also lead to a reduction in postpartum depression and anxiety symptoms (4, 5), reduction of fatigue (6) and urinary incontinence and other pelvic floor disorders (7).

Although there is still little data from high-quality experimental studies in postpartum women, scientific work conducted recently has markedly changed the conservative perception of postnatal physical activity presented in the first publications. According to current recommendations women with an uncomplicated course of puerperium should start exercising gradually, as soon as medically safe after childbirth, achieving at least 150 minutes per week, with at least moderate intensity (8, 9). Previously inactive women should start from 10–15-minute sessions. Recreational and competitive athletes should be able to return to higher intensities and volumes within a few weeks postpartum, however, close obstetric or physiotherapeutic supervision is recommended (1, 10, 11).

The postpartum period is an open window for lifestyle changes, including engagement in an exercise programme. There are several guidelines promoting physical activity in women after childbirth, which are the official position of credible obstetrics, gynecology, or sports medicine institutions (1). However, those guidelines contain very general information that exercise professionals could use for proper design and implementation of targeted exercise classes for early postpartum women. Due to many psychophysical changes that persist in women for several weeks after childbirth, puerperium can be called 'the fourth trimester' of pregnancy. Health and exercise professionals must consider the different phases of the postnatal period and their specific goals and needs that determine exercise selection. Thus, it is of utmost importance to educate exercise professionals in terms of implementation of safe and effective early postpartum exercise classes, aiming to help women to resume exercise and sports practice in a transition to 'normal' life.

These are the reasons behind the importance of having a European 'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning Qualification. The exercise professional holding this qualification is ready to plan and conduct individual or group exercise sessions for both the beginners and already active women in uncomplicated postpartum periods. The educational programmes developed on this qualification description should be evidence-based, using the recent scientific achievements in this topic (12).

This LLL qualification is purpose and outcome driven, and is aligned with the EuropeActive's main goal to get: **'More People, More Active, More Often'**.

## Historical background

At the 5<sup>th</sup> International Standards Meeting, in Amsterdam, October 2014, pre- and postnatal physical activity in the fitness industry was discussed in relation to the development of educational standards for the **Pregnancy and Postnatal Exercise Specialist**. The first version of the standards affiliated by EuropeActive was published in 2015, based on the international cooperation of 25 experts from 13 countries.

### TEG Members for the European Standards Pregnancy and Postnatal Exercise Specialist (2015)

- Prof. Rita Santos Rocha, PhD, ESDRM-IPS - Sport Sciences School of Rio Maior - Polytechnic Institute of Santarém, Rio Maior, Portugal (TEG Leader)
- Prof. Anna Szumilewicz, PhD, GUPES - Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland
- Prof. Maria Perales, PhD, UCJC - Camilo José Cela University, Madrid, Spain
- Prof. Simona Pajaujiene, PhD, LSU - Lithuanian Sports University, Kaunas, Lithuania

These standards were fully adopted within the process of external consultation and afterwards approved by the Professional Standards Committee.

### Experts who participated in the external consultation process in 2015

- Alexis Batrakoulis, MSc, GRAFTS - Greek Aerobics and Fitness Training School, Greece
- Aneta Worska, MSc, GUPES - Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland
- Athanasia Zourladani, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
- Barbara Arianna Borelli, ISSA - International Sports Sciences Association, Italy
- Charlotte Dean, BSc, Careers in Fitness, England
- Prof. Chidozie Emmanuel Mbada, PhD, Obafemi Awolowo, University College of Health Sciences, Department of Medical Rehabilitation, Nigeria
- Prof. Doriana Ioana Ciobanu, PT, PhD, University of Oradea, Faculty of Geography, Tourism and Sport, Department of Physical Education, Sport and Physical Therapy, Romania
- Fabio Grossi, MSc, PT, Pregnancy and Postnatal Exercise Specialist, ISSA - International Sports Sciences Association, Italy
- Prof. Flávia Yazigi, PhD, FMH-UL - Faculty of Human Kinetics, University of Lisbon, Brazil/Portugal
- Franco Alessandri - M.D. Obstetrician Gynecologist at San Martino Hospital, Gynecological Clinic Genoa, Italy
- Prof. Kari Bø, PhD, PT, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo, Norway
- Katrine Mari Owe, PhD, National Advisory Unit on Women's Health, Oslo, Norway
- Dr. Michelle Mottola, PhD, CSEP - Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology, Canada
- Prof. Sarah J. Moss, PhD, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
- Dr. Maria-Raquel Silva, PhD, Faculty of Health Sciences, University Fernando Pessoa, Oporto, Portugal

- Marta Fernandes, BSc, Fitness Manager Go Fit, Portugal
- Prof. Mireia Pelaez, PhD, European University of the Atlantic, Spain
- Prof. Nina Ferrari, MSc, Cologne Centre for Prevention in Childhood and Youth/ Heart Centre Cologne, University Hospital of Cologne, Germany
- Prof. Ruben Barakat, PhD, UPM - Technical University of Madrid, Spain
- Dr. Sergio Simphronio, PhD, MD, Simph Medical Fitness Institute, Brazil/Spain
- Zoran Milanović, PhD, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, University of Niš, Serbia

The following description of LLL qualification is a modified version of the EuropeActive Standards for Pregnancy and Postnatal Exercise Specialist published in 2016. After careful analysis, in the new document we have left only those professional competences that are most needed on the labour market to work effectively and safely with a low-risk woman in uncomplicated puerperium until around one year after childbirth. Nevertheless, after obtaining this qualification, we encourage exercise professionals to further develop in order to obtain more advanced knowledge and skills, among others enabling supervision of exercise programmes for women with mid-risk postpartum participants (e.g., with urinary incontinence, diastasis recti abdominis, well-controlled diabetes or hypertension).

Pregnancy and postpartum women are two different populations requiring from exercise professionals' different areas of knowledge and skills. Therefore, we have developed separate LLL qualifications: 'Exercise in Pregnancy' and 'Exercise in Postpartum'. Depending on the learner's individual professional path, these qualifications can be acquired together or separately.

#### **TEG Members for the EuropeActive 'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning Qualification**

- Prof. Anna Szumilewicz, PhD, GUPES - Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland
- Prof. Rita Santos Rocha, PhD, ESDRM-IPS - Sport Sciences School of Rio Maior - Polytechnic Institute of Santarém, Rio Maior, Portugal (TEG Leader)
- Prof. Simona Pajaujiene, PhD, LSU - Lithuanian Sports University, Kaunas, Lithuania
- Prof. Maria Perales, PhD, UCJC - Camilo José Cela University, Madrid, Spain

#### **Experts who participated in the external consultation process in 2021**

**X** To be completed after external consultation process.

## II. Description of the 'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning Qualification

### Name of the qualification

'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning (LLL) Qualification

### EQF level

✘ To be assign when all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are agreed with experts.

### Job Purpose

To independently design and implement exercise programmes for women with uncomplicated postpartum period (from the day of giving birth to about a year after giving birth).

### Occupational Description

The holder of 'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning Qualification can programme and supervise group or individual exercise, adapting the different forms of exercise to each stage of postpartum period, according to available exercise guidelines and physical fitness assessments. Such a professional has the skills to develop a postnatal exercise programme both for previously inactive and for very active women. This professional can communicate with postpartum women and their obstetric care providers or other specialists (e.g., physiotherapists, nutritionists) in tasks related to the postnatal exercise programme design and implementation.

The holder of 'Exercise in Postpartum' Lifelong Learning Qualification will take a holistic approach to the well-being of their postpartum participants. This includes providing basic information on healthy lifestyle, but always with respect to professional boundaries.

### Specific Prerequisites

There are specific prerequisites for the 'Exercise in Postpartum' qualification and practice:

1. EQF Level 3 Group Fitness Instructor or equivalent accredited certification is required if the exercise professional wants to deliver group exercise for postpartum women.
2. EQF Level 4 Personal Trainer qualification or equivalent accredited certification is required as a prerequisite if the exercise professional wants to deliver personal training sessions with a postpartum participant.

3. EQF Level 5 Exercise Specialist qualification or equivalent accredited certification is required as a minimum prerequisite if the exercise professional wants to deliver exercise programmes tailored for postpartum participants with special needs (e.g., with urinary incontinence (UI), diastasis recti abdominis (DRA), diabetes, hypertension).
4. EQF Level 6 Graduated Exercise Professional qualification or equivalent accredited certification is required as a minimum prerequisite if the exercise professional wants to deliver extensive fitness assessments related to exercise sessions with postpartum participants.
5. If aquatic activities are planned, the adequate qualifications for conducting exercise in water are required.
6. Working experience as an exercise professional is recommended as a prerequisite for the 'Exercise in Postpartum' qualification.

The holder of 'Exercise in Postpartum' qualification should work with postpartum woman after she receives medical clearance for exercise from her obstetric care provider and preferably from a physiotherapist (including the pelvic floor muscle assessment and abdominal screen for diastasis recti abdominis). The qualification holder ideally should be a member of a multidisciplinary task force, created according to the women's needs and consisting of other specialists like a general practitioner or obstetrician, physiotherapist, nutritionist, exercise psychologist or exercise physiologist.

## Occupational Roles

The holder of 'Exercise in Postpartum' Qualification has the professional competences to:

- Communicate with a postpartum woman and her obstetric care provider in tasks related to the design and implementation of an exercise programme;
- Perform initial basic fitness screening of a postpartum woman before her participation in exercise programme;
- Plan and supervise group or individual exercise, according to women's condition, fitness level, type of delivery, the course of puerperium, following evidence-based guidelines and physicians' recommendations;
- Adapt various forms of physical activity and exercise to the course of puerperium, the postpartum woman's needs and preferences, and also to the infant's activity and feeding practices;
- Conducts exercise sessions for postpartum women working out with their infants;
- Recognise and respond to the typical physical and physiologic adaptations, and signs and symptoms related to postpartum period;
- Recognise and respond to warning signs to terminate exercise;
- Provide women with information on postnatal physical activity and healthy lifestyle;
- Respect own professional limitations in implementing exercise programmes for postpartum participants.

They are **not** endorsed to:

- Prescribe rehabilitation programmes;

- Provide extensive exercise testing for postpartum women;
- Provide exercise testing and prescription for at risk postpartum women;
- Prescribe any kind of medication or supplements;
- Prescribe nutritional programmes;
- Diagnose any psychological disorders or mental health conditions;
- Provide any kind of psychological counselling;
- Diagnose diseases, disabilities or other clinical conditions;
- Conduct DRA / UI or any other rehabilitation courses which is the physiotherapists' task.

### **The Learning Outcomes Units (Areas of Core Knowledge, Skills and Responsibility and Autonomy)**

The 'Exercise in Postpartum' LLL Qualification include the following units of learning outcomes (areas of core knowledge areas, skills, responsibility, and autonomy):

1. Theoretical basis of planning and conducting exercise programmes for postpartum women;
2. Health issues and safety considerations related to postpartum period;
3. Health screening and fitness assessment in postpartum women;
4. Prescription, implementation, and adaptation of exercise for postpartum women, including exercising with an infant;
5. Promotion of physical activity during postpartum period.

#### **Unit 1: Theoretical basis of planning and conducting exercise programmes for postpartum women**

Learning outcomes – the learner:	Assessment criteria – the learner:
1.1 Knows organizational and legal issues in terms of conducting postnatal exercises	1.1.1 Defines the job purpose of an exercise professional holding the 'Exercise in Postpartum' LLL qualification, own professional roles and limitations, including the place in multidisciplinary task force working with postpartum women, if necessary (e.g., consisting of specialists like a general practitioner or obstetrician,

	<p>physiotherapist nutritionist, exercise psychologist or physiologist);</p> <p>1.1.2 Describes potential national legislation related to the provision of exercise to postnatal participants;</p> <p>1.1.3 Describes the range of responsibility and ethical issues regarding working with postnatal women.</p>
<p>1.2. Understands morphological, physiological, and biomechanical aspects of postpartum period and response to exercise</p>	<p>1.2.1. Describes current recommendations for physical activity during postpartum (e.g., WHO (8), ACOG (9), SOCG/CSEP (13), SMA (14), IOC (10);</p> <p>1.2.2. Describes the structure of the female reproductive organs;</p> <p>1.2.3. Describes the basics of the physiology of each phase of postpartum period (acute, immediate, delayed postpartum) and physiology of lactation;</p> <p>1.2.4. Explains adaptive changes to postpartum (including to the musculoskeletal system, respiratory, metabolism, endocrine and biomechanics of women), determining planning and conducting postnatal exercise programmes;</p> <p>1.2.5. Explains the potential benefits of postnatal physical activity for the mother's health and the course of puerperium (e.g., in terms of body composition, posture, sleep patterns, and quality of life).</p>
<p>1.3. Understands psychosocial aspects of postpartum period and impact of physical activity</p>	<p>1.3.1. Describes psychosocial changes related to postpartum period;</p> <p>1.3.2. Lists the main barriers to participation in postnatal physical activity and exercise;</p> <p>1.3.3. Describes signs of depression and anxiety in postpartum women;</p> <p>1.3.4. Describes stress management techniques (e.g., relaxation</p>

	exercises, breathing exercise, meditation, visualisation, etc.).
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## Unit 2: Health issues and safety considerations related to postpartum period

Learning outcomes – the learner:	Assessment criteria – the learner:
2.1. Understands the preventive role of physical activity for the health of postpartum women	2.1.1. Describes the risk factors and prevalence of discomforts and health conditions associated with postpartum (e.g., inflammation of stitches and vulva veins, perineal injury or caesarean section wound, painful breasts or inflammation of the breasts or mastitis; back pain, stress urinary incontinence, diastasis recti abdominis, fatigue, interrupted sleep; overweight; diabetes, hypertension); 2.1.2. Explains the preventive role of postnatal physical activity in relation to common potential postpartum discomforts, complications, and chronic disease.
2.2. Knows the limitations and contraindications to physical activity and exercise during postpartum period	2.2.1. Lists contraindications for physical activity during postpartum period; 2.2.2. Lists reasons for an urgent termination of a postnatal exercise session; 2.2.3. Describes the possible adaptations to physical activity and exercise in the presence of specific complications in the course of puerperium and the mother's health; 2.2.4. Lists sport activities to be avoided or limited during immediate postpartum (e.g., exercise in water or high-impact activities).
2.3. Understands the role of healthy lifestyle for proper course of puerperium	2.3.1. Describes basic nutrition recommendations for postpartum and lactating women; 2.3.1 Describes other aspects of healthy

	lifestyle related to postpartum and early motherhood (e.g., sleep and rest patterns, avoiding stress use of tobacco, alcohol and caffeine).
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### Unit 3: Health screening and fitness assessment in postpartum women

Learning outcomes – the learner:	Assessment criteria – the learner:
3.1. Knows the rules and tools for fitness screening and assessment of postpartum women	3.1.1. Describes the rules and safety considerations in screening and exercise testing of postpartum women; 3.1.2. Describes tools which can be used in the pre-exercise and fitness assessment of postpartum women (e.g. the protocol developed by Goom et al. (11), International Physical Activity Questionnaire (15); SF-12 Health Survey (16); PARQ+ (17));
3.2. Is able to perform basic health screening and fitness assessments in postpartum women	3.2.1. Checks woman’s medical clearance for exercise, based on the obstetric care provider or physiotherapist prescriptions, and/or women’s self-reported questionnaires; 3.2.2. Performs basic health screening and fitness and functional assessments of a postpartum women, using available tools.

### Unit 4: Prescription, implementation, and adaptation of exercise for postpartum women

Learning outcomes – the learner:	Assessment criteria – the learner:
4.1. Understands rules of planning, conducting, and monitoring exercise programmes for postpartum women	4.1.1. Describes current recommendations for exercise prescription for postpartum women (1); 4.1.2. Describes the most recommended forms of exercise for each stage of

	<p>postpartum period (e.g., walking, core training, dancing, pelvic-floor training, stretching);</p> <p>4.1.3. Explains how the type of delivery may affect the planning and implementation of exercise for women in immediate postpartum period (e.g., the need of proper selection of exercise positions and equipment);</p> <p>4.1.4. Describes exercises which can be performed by a woman at hospital and at home in the immediate postpartum period;</p> <p>4.1.5. Describes the rules of returning to sport activities of higher intensities and more advanced skills (e.g., running, outdoor cycling, skating);</p> <p>4.1.6. Describes the structure of the postnatal exercise session and justifies the need for planning shorter intervals of exercise;</p> <p>4.1.7. Describes alternative exercise equipment which can be used by a postpartum participant at home (e.g., a chair, water bottles, barre);</p> <p>4.1.8. Describes potential activities which can reduce time spent sedentary by postpartum women.</p>
<p>4.2. Is able to properly design an exercise programme for postpartum women</p>	<p>4.2.1. Designs an exercise programme according to the exercise prescription principles (i.e., type of exercise, intensity of exercise, duration of the sessions, weekly frequency of sessions, volume, and progression/periodisation) relevant to postpartum women, their goals, medical history, exercise environment, and their duties and needs related to the childcare and social support;</p> <p>4.2.2. Selects exercises and modifies their techniques with regard to women's well-being, functional readiness, the type of delivery, and</p>

	<p>the course of puerperium; in particular the appearance of postpartum-related discomforts (e.g., perineal injury or caesarean section wound, back pain, stress urinary incontinence, diastasis recti abdominis, fatigue, interrupted sleep);</p> <p>4.2.3. Selects the appropriate place and equipment to conduct exercise sessions, as well as their alternative options outside the fitness club or at home (planning a suitable place to care for your baby or breastfeed if needed);</p> <p>4.2.4. Incorporates the exercise programme into the postpartum women's other daily activities, taking into account their preferences and exercise abilities, and also the infants' activity and breastfeeding or feeding practices.</p>
<p>4.3. Is able to properly conduct, monitor and adapt an exercise programme for postpartum women</p>	<p>4.3.1. Instructs the postpartum participant how to perform exercises (including aerobic exercises, resistance, stretching, neuromotor, body posture exercises, pelvic floor muscle exercises and exercises for DRA treatment) in a way that is understandable to the participant, using professional terminology;</p> <p>4.3.2. Demonstrates proper technique for performing exercises recommended for postpartum women;</p> <p>4.3.3. Monitors the exercise sessions, including the intensity and technique of exercise, taking into account the information available about the course of postpartum and the health and fitness status of the postpartum participant;</p> <p>4.3.4. If necessary, uses the options of difficulty and intensity of exercises, adjusting to the well-being and</p>

	<p>abilities of the postpartum participant;</p> <p>4.3.5. Corrects incorrectly performed exercises, explaining to the participant the importance of changing the technique for the prevention or elimination of postpartum ailments;</p> <p>4.3.6. Evaluates the exercise programme and adjusts it as necessary, taking into account the postpartum participants goals, capabilities, preferences, exercise progression, the course of puerperium and indications from other professionals (e.g., an obstetric care provider, nutritionist; physiotherapist).</p>
<p>4.4. Is able to implement exercises performed by postpartum women with their infants</p>	<p>4.4.1. Describes the basics of the child's motor and psychosocial development in the first year of life;</p> <p>4.4.2. Describes the rules for how to safely position, hold or carry the baby while the mother is doing the exercises;</p> <p>4.4.3. Conducts and monitors exercises sessions providing mothers and their infants comfortable environment (including proper temperature, avoiding heavy noise, bright light, etc.);</p> <p>4.4.4. Lists warning signs for immediate termination of an exercise session related to infant discomforts;</p> <p>4.4.5. Describes the rules and demonstrates skills for giving first aid to an infant.</p>

## Unit 5: Promotion of physical activity during postpartum period

Learning outcomes – the learner:	Assessment criteria – the learner:
<p>5.1. Is able to provide postpartum women with proper information before and during exercise session</p>	<p>5.1.1. Provides postpartum participants with information on the rules of exercising after childbirth (including safety, symptoms requiring immediate discontinuation of exercise, recommended outfit, bra, hygienic materials, shoes and equipment);</p> <p>5.1.2. Provides postpartum participants with information about the benefits of the individual exercises for the health and well-being (e.g., indicates exercises to prevent back pain, urinary incontinence);</p> <p>5.1.3. Uses appropriate motivational tools to keep the postpartum participant's adherence to the exercise programme.</p>
<p>5.2. Is ready to promote physical activity among postpartum women, other exercise professionals and representatives from other sectors, including the health sector</p>	<p>5.2.1. Justifies the need for physical activity during postpartum, explaining the positive impact of physical activity and the negative impact of inactivity on the health of mother and child;</p> <p>5.2.2. Dispel common myths about exercise during postpartum (e.g., making breast milk sour through exercise; having to wait up to several months after giving birth with any exercise);</p> <p>5.2.3. Reacts to the postpartum participant's or other professionals' different position on the postnatal exercise, convincing them to be right thanks to the reference to reliable sources of information.</p>

### III. Recommended methods of learning outcomes assessment

To obtain 'Exercise in Postpartum' LLL Qualification, the learner must confirm the achievement of all learning outcomes defined in this document. Below are examples of assessment methods for individual learning outcomes. The training providers do not have to limit themselves to these methods. However, their selection must be logical, e.g., the skills to conduct classes cannot be confirmed through a theoretical test only.

The recommended assessment methods:

1. To assess the learner's knowledge – various forms of theoretical tests, including descriptive tasks and multiple choice questions.
2. To assess the learner's skills to plan an exercise programme and adopt exercises to special needs of a postpartum participant - written practical task consisting of the independent preparation of exercise programme/session with proposed modifications for the situations specified in the case description of the postpartum participant (case studies).
3. To assess the skills to implement postnatal exercise session, communicate with the postpartum participant and provide her with information on postnatal physical activity and healthy lifestyle – observation in simulated conditions of preparation and supervision of postnatal exercise session.

Observation in simulated conditions can take place live or be documented through video material. Observation in simulated conditions may be supplemented by an interview with the assessor.

No.	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria	Recommended method of learning outcomes assessment
Unit 1. Theoretical basis of planning and conducting exercise programmes for postpartum women			
1.1.	Knows organizational and legal issues in terms of conducting postnatal exercises	1.1.1. Defines the job purpose of an exercise professional holding the 'Exercise in Postpartum' LLL qualification, own professional roles and limitations, including the place in multidisciplinary task force working with postpartum women, if	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks

		necessary (e.g., consisting of specialists like a general practitioner or obstetrician, physiotherapist nutritionist, exercise psychologist or physiologist);	
		1.1.2. Describes potential national legislation related to the provision of exercise to postnatal participants;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		1.1.3. Describes the range of responsibility and ethical issues regarding working with postnatal women.	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
1.2.	Understands morphological, physiological, and biomechanical aspects of postpartum period and response to exercise	1.3.5. 1.2.1 Describes current recommendations for physical activity during postpartum (e.g., WHO (8), ACOG (9), SOCG/CSEP (13), SMA (14), IOC (10).	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		1.3.6. Describes the structure of the female reproductive organs;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		1.3.7. Describes the basics of the physiology of each phase of postpartum period (acute, immediate, delayed postpartum) and physiology of lactation;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		1.2.4. Explains adaptive changes to postpartum (including to the musculoskeletal system, respiratory, metabolism, endocrine and biomechanics of women), determining planning and conducting postnatal exercise programmes;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks

		1.2.5. Explains the potential benefits of postnatal physical activity for the mother's health and the course of puerperium (e.g., in terms of body composition, posture, sleep patterns, and quality of life).	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
1.3.	Understands psychosocial aspects of postpartum period and impact of physical activity	1.3.1. Describes psychosocial changes related to postpartum period;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		1.3.2. Lists the main barriers to participation in postnatal physical activity and exercise;	Theoretical test
		1.3.3. Describes signs of depression and anxiety in postpartum women;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		1.3.4. Describes stress management techniques (e.g., relaxation exercises, breathing exercise, meditation, visualisation, etc.).	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
<b>Unit 2: Health issues and safety considerations related to postpartum period</b>			
2.1.	Understands the preventive role of physical activity for the health of postpartum women	2.3.2. 2.1.1. Describes the risk factors and prevalence of discomforts and health conditions associated with postpartum (e.g., inflammation of stitches and vulva veins, perineal injury or caesarean section wound, painful breasts or inflammation of the breasts or mastitis; back pain, stress urinary incontinence, diastasis recti abdominis, fatigue, interrupted sleep; overweight; diabetes, hypertension);	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		2.3.3. Explains the preventive role of postnatal physical activity in relation to common	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks

		potential postpartum discomforts, complications, and chronic disease.	
2.2.	Knows the limitations and contraindications to physical activity and exercise during postpartum period	2.2.1. Lists contraindications for physical activity during postpartum period;	Theoretical test
		2.2.2. Lists reasons for an urgent termination of a postnatal exercise session;	Theoretical test
		2.2.3. Describes the possible adaptations to physical activity and exercise in the presence of specific complications in the course of puerperium and the mother's health;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		2.2.4. Lists sport activities to be avoided or limited during immediate postpartum (e.g., exercise in water or high-impact activities).	Theoretical test
2.3.	Understands the role of healthy lifestyle for proper course of puerperium	2.3.1. Describes basic nutrition recommendations for postpartum and lactating women;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		2.3.2. Describes other aspects of healthy lifestyle related to postpartum and early motherhood (e.g., sleep and rest patterns, avoiding stress use of tobacco, alcohol and caffeine).	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
<b>Unit 3: Health screening and fitness assessment in postpartum women</b>			
3.1.	Knows the rules and tools for fitness screening and assessment of postpartum women	3.1.1. Describes the rules and safety considerations in screening and exercise testing of postpartum women;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks

		3.1.2. Describes tools which can be used in the pre-exercise and fitness assessment of postpartum women (e.g. the protocol developed by Goom et al. (11), International Physical Activity Questionnaire (15); SF-12 Health Survey (16); PARQ+ (17).	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
3.2.	Is able to perform basic health screening and fitness assessments in postpartum women	3.2.1. Checks woman's medical clearance for exercise, based on the obstetric care provider or physiotherapist prescriptions, and/or women's self-reported questionnaires;	Practical tasks
		3.2.2. Performs basic health screening and fitness and functional assessments of a postpartum women, using available tools.	Practical tasks
<b>Unit 4: Prescription, implementation, and adaptation of exercise for postpartum women, including exercising with an infant</b>			
4.1.	Understands rules of planning, conducting, and monitoring exercise programmes for postpartum women	4.1.1. Describes current recommendations for exercise prescription for postpartum women (1);	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.1.2. Describes the most recommended forms of exercise for each stage of postpartum period (e.g., walking, core training, dancing, pelvic-floor training, stretching);	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.1.3. Explains how the type of delivery may affect the planning and implementation of exercise for women in immediate	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks

		postpartum period (e.g., the need of proper selection of exercise positions and equipment);	
		4.1.4. Describes exercises which can be performed by a woman at hospital and at home in the immediate postpartum period;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.1.5. Describes the rules of returning to sport activities of higher intensities and more advanced skills (e.g., running, outdoor cycling, skating);	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.1.6. Describes the structure of the postnatal exercise session and justifies the need for planning shorter intervals of exercise;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.1.7. Describes alternative exercise equipment which can be used by a postpartum participant at home (e.g., a chair, water bottles, barre);	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.1.8. Describes potential activities which can reduce time spent sedentary by postpartum women.	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
4.2.	Is able to properly design an exercise programme for postpartum women	4.2.1. Designs an exercise programme according to the exercise prescription principles (i.e., type of exercise, intensity of exercise, duration of the sessions, weekly frequency of sessions, volume, and progression/periodisation) relevant to postpartum women, their goals, medical history, exercise environment, and their	Practical tasks

		duties and needs related to the childcare and social support;	
		4.2.2. Selects exercises and modifies their techniques with regard to women's well-being, functional readiness, the type of delivery, and the course of puerperium; in particular the appearance of postpartum-related discomforts (e.g., perineal injury or caesarean section wound, back pain, stress urinary incontinence, diastasis recti abdominis, fatigue, interrupted sleep);	Practical tasks
		4.2.3. Selects the appropriate place and equipment to conduct exercise sessions, as well as their alternative options outside the fitness club or at home (planning a suitable place to care for your baby or breastfeed if needed);	Practical tasks
		4.2.4. Incorporates the exercise programme into the postpartum women's other daily activities, taking into account their preferences and exercise abilities, and also the infants' activity and breastfeeding or feeding practices.	Practical tasks
4.3.	Is able to properly conduct, monitor and adapt an exercise programme for postpartum women	4.3.1. Instructs the postpartum participant how to perform exercises (including aerobic exercises, resistance, stretching, neuromotor, body posture exercises, pelvic floor muscle exercises and exercises for	Practical tasks

		DRA treatment) in a way that is understandable to the participant, using professional terminology;	
		4.3.2. Demonstrates proper technique for performing exercises recommended for postpartum women;	Practical tasks
		4.3.3. Monitors the exercise sessions, including the intensity and technique of exercise, taking into account the information available about the course of postpartum and the health and fitness status of the postpartum participant;	Practical tasks
		4.3.4. If necessary, uses the options of difficulty and intensity of exercises, adjusting to the well-being and abilities of the postpartum participant;	Practical tasks
		4.3.5. Corrects incorrectly performed exercises, explaining to the participant the importance of changing the technique for the prevention or elimination of postpartum ailments;	Practical tasks

		4.3.6. Evaluates the exercise programme and adjusts it as necessary, taking into account the postpartum participants goals, capabilities, preferences, exercise progression, the course of puerperium and indications from other professionals (e.g., an obstetric care provider, nutritionist; physiotherapist).	Practical tasks
4.4.	Is able to implement exercises performed by postpartum women with their infants	4.4.1. Describes the basics of the child's motor and psychosocial development in the first year of life;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.4.2. Describes the rules for how to safely position, hold or carry the baby while the mother is doing the exercises;	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
		4.4.3. Conducts and monitors exercises sessions providing mothers and their infants comfortable environment (including proper temperature, avoiding heavy noise, bright light, etc.);	Practical tasks
		4.4.4. Lists warning signs for immediate termination of an exercise session related to infant discomforts;	Theoretical test
		4.4.5. Describes the rules and demonstrates skills for giving first aid to an infant.	Theoretical test with descriptive tasks
Unit 5: Promotion of physical activity during postpartum period			
5.1.		5.1.1. Provides postpartum participants with information on the rules of exercising after	Practical tasks

	Is able to provide postpartum women with proper information before and during exercise session	childbirth (including safety, symptoms requiring immediate discontinuation of exercise, recommended outfit, bra, hygienic materials, shoes and equipment);	
		5.1.2. Provides postpartum participants with information about the benefits of the individual exercises for the health and well-being (e.g., indicates exercises to prevent back pain, urinary incontinence).	Practical tasks
		5.1.3. Uses appropriate motivational tools to keep the postpartum participant's adherence to the exercise programme.	Practical tasks
5.2.	Is ready to promote physical activity among postpartum women, other exercise professionals and representatives from other sectors, including the health sector	5.2.1. Justifies the need for physical activity during postpartum, explaining the positive impact of physical activity and the negative impact of inactivity on the health of mother and child;	Theoretical or practical tasks
		5.2.2. Dispel common myths about exercise during postpartum (e.g., making breast milk sour through exercise; having to wait up to several months after giving birth with any exercise);	Theoretical or practical tasks
		5.2.3. Reacts to the postpartum participant's or other professionals' different position on the postnatal exercise, convincing them to be right thanks to the reference to reliable sources of information.	Theoretical or practical tasks

## IV. The number of credits ECVET, ECTS and recommended learning workload

We strongly emphasise that the learning output of education (learning outcomes), not the education process itself is the most important for a learner. However, EuropeActive’s aim is to make the accreditation process for training providers more transparent and the educational and vocational programmes more comparable. Therefore, we presented below recommended Guided Learning Hours<sup>1</sup> for the ‘Exercise in Postpartum’ LLL Qualification. Using credits from ECVET<sup>2</sup> and ECTS<sup>3</sup> in this qualification, we also want to facilitate the transferability of qualifications or individual learning units between vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) systems.

<b>Recommended Minimum Guided Learning Hours, estimated Total Qualification Time, number of ECVET and ECTS for ‘Exercise in Postpartum’ Lifelong Learning Qualification</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Learning outcomes unit</b>	<b>Recommended Guided Learning hours<sup>1</sup></b>
1.	Theoretical basis of planning and conducting exercise programmes for postpartum women;	6
2.	Health issues and safety considerations related to postpartum period;	3
3.	Health screening and fitness assessment in postpartum women;	3
4.	Prescription, implementation, and adaptation of exercise for postpartum women, including exercising with an infant;	6
5.	Promotion of physical activity during postpartum period.	2
<b>Minimum Guided Learning Hours</b>		<b>20</b>
<b>Estimated Total Qualification Time (Guided Learning Hours + Self Learning Hours)</b>		<b>50-60</b>
<b>Number of ECVET<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Number of ECTS<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>2</b>
<sup>1</sup> Time of 45-60 min; <sup>2</sup> 1 ECVET is approx. 8-10 Guided Learning Hours + 15-20 Self Learning Hours (25-30 learning hours in total); <sup>3</sup> 1 ECTS = 25-30 learning hours;		

<sup>1</sup> For more information see the “Learning hours recommendation for EA Standards or Qualifications’ (2020)

<sup>2</sup> ECVET – European Credit System for Vocational and Education Training

<sup>3</sup> ECTS – European Credit Transfer System (HE)

The educational credits obtained in connection with the confirmation of this qualification can be used to maintain the status of exercise professional in EREPS. It can also be part of the required credits to apply for recognition as a Master Personal Trainer or to apply for qualification at a higher EQF level (e.g., EQF 5 Exercise Specialist)<sup>4</sup>.

Training providers should note that the required Guided Learning Hours above are the minimums we would accept in the accreditation process. In addition, we will carefully analyse the strategy for assessing the achievement of individual learning outcomes. We recommend to exceed these minimums if training providers recognise that more hours are needed for learners to achieve all learning outcomes indicated for 'Exercise in Pregnancy' LLL qualification. In special cases, it is possible to apply for the accreditation of vocational courses that do not meet the criterion of minimum guided learning hours. In such cases, it will then be necessary to provide both a detailed assessment strategy and evidence that all learning outcomes have been achieved by each learner.

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<sup>4</sup> The EA's professional path for exercise professionals has been presented in a separate document

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