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"Power strolling" fits moms on the move

By **Richard Seven**
Seattle Times staff reporter

Moms, by definition, put themselves second. Or third. Or fourth.

Factor in tending to a newborn, whose every move consumes, and it's easy to see what many moms leave out — themselves. Between all that love and satisfaction lie perpetual fatigue, weight gain and the feeling that the rest of the world is lapping you. Exercise can solve some if not all of that, but what mom has the time?

These days, more moms are making the time. And far more opportunities than ever are presenting themselves, from exercise strollers to events to mother-centric classes — and organizations devoted just to them.

Don't like running or walking?

Get creative on the playground. Do reverse crunches on a slide, chin-ups on the monkey bars or stretches using a swing. Jog in place or jump a little rope.

Pilates is a good way to rebuild the core. Studio Evolve in Wallingford (www.studio-evolve.com) has a private room specifically for a mom and young child. Pilates is considered one of the best ways for women to regain core strength (and often, shape) after childbirth.

Home workouts. Next month, fitness model Jennifer Nicole Lee releases two DVDs in her "Fabulously Fit Moms" series. Workouts include standard fat-burning and strength moves, but also ways moms can include their kids in the workout routines; www.kochvision.com.

Stroller Strides is a prime example. Mothers bring their kids and even incorporate them into a workout. Twice a week, at Magnuson Park,



enlarge MIKE SIEGEL / THE SEATTLE TIMES
Members of the Stroller Strides fitness program for moms and their babies work out at Green Lake during a recent class.

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personal trainer Kelli Currie leads moms, with strollers in tow, on a workout that alternates toning, core work and, of course, "power strolling." The class moved outdoors May 1, but during the winter and early spring, Currie, a mother of a young son, led class on an indoor soccer field at the park.

"Moms in general are in a vulnerable place," says Currie, who also teaches at Green Lake and Wedgewood, "and first-time moms are especially. There are issues with energy and sometimes body image to work through. And I see this as a way to help moms connect with one another."

Sometimes the women form a circle. Sometimes they line up, facing and singing "the wheels on the bus go round and round" to their babies. They walk briskly, or jog and spend the last 10 minutes of the 50-minute class working on their abs and stretching. They will stop from time to time to tend to their children. Nobody flinches when one gets fussy. The "I-know" camaraderie is part of what sells the participants.

Currie says dads have participated, too, and she occasionally holds "family classes" in which spouses can attend at no charge. Sometimes, nannies or grandparents enroll. For details or how to find classes (including outside Seattle), see www.strollerstrides.com.

SeeMOMMYrun is a national organization that helps connect mothers who want to find walking or running partners. The Seattle area is an especially active one, with 240 members and 19 different groups.

Andrea Vincent founded SeeMommyrun.com after the birth of her first child.

"I found it difficult to meet other moms ... especially other women as crazy about staying in shape as me," she says on her Web site. "I knew there were thousands of women nearby facing this same isolation."

In fact, today begins National Women's Health Week, and on Saturday, thousands of mothers are expected to walk or run in a nationwide event called "Mom, the Everyday Athlete." Participants must wear pedometers because organizers want to establish a world record for "most steps taken by moms collectively on one day."

The ultimate mission of the event, organized by the Wheat Foods Council and Vincent's group, is to empower moms to make their health a lifetime priority. To participate, register at www.wheatfoods.org. Then find a group and day to walk or run, through www.seeMommyrun.com.

Any mom signing up by Monday may still receive a free pedometer. Those who miss that deadline will have to use their own. Everyone is welcome, but only those with step counters can be part of the record effort.

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