

**Maternal Fitness**, by Julie Tupler, RN, with Andrea Thompson, 1996. (A Fireside Book published by Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, \$12.00, 160 pages, paperback)

Julie Tupler is a registered nurse, a certified fitness trainer, and a childbirth educator. She is the founder of Maternal Fitness, a one-on-one labor preparation program based in New York City. Throughout her years of experience she has compiled data, expertise, and proven techniques into a new and innovative book of the same name.

This book takes us past the "Just keep fit" attitude and really shows women how to stretch, strengthen, and relax the muscles they will use most in labor, as well as instructs them in what changes occur in the pregnant body and how to work with these changes.

*Maternal Fitness* is a wonderful combination of exercise, education, and relaxation to help create a more enjoyable pregnancy and a quicker recovery. Some specific topics include: The do's and don'ts of prenatal exercise; the Tupler technique: getting to know the muscles you need for labor and birth; the do-it-yourself fitness evaluation; posture, muscle strength and flexibility, nutrition, and visualization. Julie defines the BAKs Basics: 13 moves that pregnant women should practice every day.

Drawings are liberally applied to the text to explain exercises, define correct posture and identify muscle groups.

Julie's primary goals for the pregnant woman are first, prevention of

common pregnancy discomforts such as back pain, edema, enlarged painful breasts, etc; second, preparation for labor both through exercise and understanding the process of birth; and third, restoration. Julie explains it best by stating "It's just common sense that the more thoughtfully you exercise your body during pregnancy, the faster and more easily it will recover or restore itself to your pre-pregnancy shape and energy level."

Julie Tupler has a wonderful sense of humor and enthusiasm that keeps your attention on her instruction, and makes you want to learn more. She truly makes her program come alive.

*Jill Cohen practices midwifery in the Eugene, Oregon area. She is associate editor at Midwifery Today.*