

Women's health Training through pregnancy

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Now that you're pregnant, you might be wondering what needs to change and what can stay the same. The good news? Staying active tops the list of things to keep for the next 9 months.

Whether you're looking to continue your current workout routine or start a new one, always speak to a doctor PRIOR. Here's some information you need to know about staying fit during your pregnancy.

BENEFITS OF EXERCISING WHILE PREGNANT

If you think of exercise solely as a way to fit into a smaller pair of pants, you may need to shift your perspective (and priorities) now that you're pregnant. According to research exercising during pregnancy can lead to a lower incidence of:

- Preterm birth.
- Caesarean birth.
- Excessive weight gain.
- Gestational diabetes or hypertensive disorders such as preeclampsia.
- Lower birth weight.

It's also an excellent way to:

- Maintain physical fitness.
- Reduce low back pain.
- Manage symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Reduce stress.
- Improve postpartum recovery.

Some exercises can be implemented in each trimester to support the body through its physical changes while preparing for an easier return to exercise postpartum. There will be a shift of focus on core and pelvic floor awareness, which can help you build a deeper core-based connection before the real changes begin to take place.

SAFETY TIPS FOR EXERCISES WHILE PREGNANT

When considering exercises for pregnancy, there aren't a lot of activities that need to be removed from your current regime.

While the majority of exercises can be continued throughout each trimester, modifying and scaling back where needed can help increase the strength, stability, and physical adaptability as your body changes. With that in mind, here are some general safety tips to consider when exercising during pregnancy:

- Get clearance from your doctor if you're new to exercise or you have any health conditions that may contraindicate exercise.
- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after exercise.
- Wear supportive clothing such as a supportive sports bra.
- Don't become overheated, especially during the first trimester.
- Avoid lying flat on your back for too long, especially during the third trimester.
- Avoid contact sports and hot yoga.

CARDIO FOR ALL THREE TRIMESTERS

Cardiovascular exercises such as walking, swimming, jogging, cross training and stationary cycling are top picks during all three trimesters.

Unless your doctor has told you to modify physical activity, follow the guidelines which recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week.

**Again, to stress – if you are new to exercise
ALWAYS get a doctor's clearance before trying
something new.**

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EXERCISES TO DO IN THE FIRST TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY

The first three months of pregnancy can be a wild ride of emotions. From elation and pure joy to concern, worry, and even fear as you begin to realize that you're responsible for nourishing, growing, and keeping this tiny soon-to-be human being safe and healthy. As long as you're not considered a high-risk pregnancy, you can continue with your regular exercise routine in the first trimester.

The foundation of a well-rounded prenatal fitness routine should include at least 150 minutes of cardiovascular activity each week and 2 to 3 days of strength training exercises that target the major muscle groups.

It should also focus on specific exercises that help make pregnancy easier and prepare you for labour and childbirth.

One area of importance, is to work on body awareness to prepare for changes in your posture. Doing an exercise like the pelvic curl is a great way to begin working on spinal mobility and strengthening the abdominal muscles that will support your belly as it grows.

EXERCISES TO DO IN THE SECOND TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY

Once the reality sets in that you're in this for the long haul, you may notice a feeling of calmness and even an increase in energy over the next several weeks. Many women say this is the trimester where they feel the best, which is why it's an excellent time to focus on your fitness routine.

That said, since the uterus is getting bigger, you do need to be a bit more careful with physical activity. Activities to avoid during the second trimester include any high impact exercise that involves jumping, running, balance, or exhaustion. You also want to avoid any exercise that has you lying on your back for extended periods of time.

In addition to the exercises in the first trimester, consider adding some variations to your squat such as narrow squats, single-leg squats, as well as wide stance squats. Incline pushups, which target the chest, triceps,

and shoulders, are another move to add during this trimester.

Now that the core foundation has been established, training the core as the abdomen expands is a much easier concept. And with things beginning to shift and grow even more at this time, it's often recommended that moms-to-be continue to work on stability strength with an extra focus on the inner thighs and glutes.

EXERCISES TO DO IN THE THIRD TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY

You'll definitely notice a slowdown — if not an abrupt halt at times — during the third trimester, as your body begins to prepare for labour and childbirth. This is a great time to focus on cardiovascular activities and keep up your mobility and abdominal strength with:

- Walking.
- Swimming.
- Prenatal yoga.
- Pilates.
- Pelvic floor exercises.
- Bodyweight moves.

These help to keep your upper and lower body muscles strong. For safety purposes, avoid any exercise that places you at a risk for falls. "Because your centre of gravity is changing daily, it's smart to avoid exercises that would lead to a loss of balance, resulting in a fall and possible abdominal impact that could harm your baby.

It's also not uncommon to experience pubic symphysis pain, which is pain in the front pubic bone. Because of this, it's recommended to avoid exercises where your legs are too far apart, which will further aggravate this pain.

CONCLUSION

Staying physically active during pregnancy is beneficial for both mom and baby.

Including some form of exercise most days of the week can help keep your core strong, your muscles fit, and your cardiovascular system in top shape. Plus, it can do wonders for your mental health.

Make sure to listen to your body and stop if you feel any discomfort, pain or fatigue. And as always, talk with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about how your body is responding to an exercise program.