



Exercise During Pregnancy

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Staying active throughout pregnancy can help you stay healthy and feel your best. Women's bodies go through many physical and emotional changes during pregnancy and keeping a regular exercise routine may assist you in coping with these changes. There are many benefits to continuing or starting a program during pregnancy:

- Boost your energy.
- Sleep better.
- Reduce pregnancy discomfort (low back pain, swelling in legs, restless leg syndrome, etc.)
- Reduce stress.
- Improve self-image.
- Get your body back quicker after childbirth.

If you were physically active before becoming pregnant, you should be able to continue your routine in moderation, making accommodations for your growing body. If you have never exercised before, you can safely start a program after consulting with your doctor.

Low impact exercises are the safest during pregnancy such as swimming, walking, and stationary bicycling. Performing light weight training exercises will also keep your muscles tone and strong to maintain good posture to accommodate for your growing front side. Following these guidelines will help you and your baby stay safe during exercise.

- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after to keep your body well hydrated.
- Listen to your body. If you cannot hold a conversation while exercising you may be pushing yourself too hard. Your heartbeat should not exceed 140 beats per minute.
- Warm up and cool down approximately 5-10 minutes.
- Do not exercise in hot, humid weather.
- Avoid lying on your back, especially in second and third trimesters due to extra pressure on the Vena cava (the vein that returns blood to your heart.)
- Avoid bouncy, jerky movements which can cause you to become unbalanced. (Your center of gravity is constantly changing as your baby grows.)

Although exercise is important and can be beneficial during pregnancy, it needs to be monitored closely. If you start experiencing any nausea, dizziness, sudden changes in body temperature, shortness of breath, swelling in calves, vaginal bleeding, sharp pains in abdomen and chest, fluid leaking and blurred vision, stop exercising immediately. Remember to consult with your doctor about starting an exercise routine even if you have been active prior to pregnancy.