

Exercise

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Hup, Hup, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Work it, women! You Slackers! Grrrr....

Are you tired of the same old drill?

...Well many of us aren't because some sources say as few as 3%-12% of us exercise anyway...so if you've been an exercise slacker in the past, pregnancy is an important time to get moving. On the other hand, if you're an avid exercise fanatic, pregnancy might be the time for you to tone down your rigorous regime a little.

Either way, this guy just isn't qualified to manage your exercise program during pregnancy. You'll need to design a gentle exercise program that fits your own needs.



Exercise during pregnancy is important because pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum recovery are physically demanding, and require a great deal of strength and stamina. Exercise can strengthen muscles, bones, and joints. It increases efficiency of the respiratory and cardiovascular system, improving circulation and the pumping power of your heart. It improves sleep, moods, energy levels, and aids in weight control. An appropriate, regular exercise program can help relieve diabetes, the aches-and-pains discomfort of pregnancy, tension, depression, and fatigue.

General recommendations for exercise during pregnancy

- ✧ The purpose of exercise during pregnancy is to achieve a sense of balance and harmony, not reach new performance levels.
- ✧ Programs should begin slowly, gradually building strength, endurance, and flexibility.
- ✧ Aim for 3-5 exercise sessions per week, which last 20 to 30 minutes.
- ✧ Competitive or extreme activities are discouraged during pregnancy.
- ✧ Exercise movements for pregnant women should be smooth and flowing, not jerky, jarring, have rapid change in direction, or cause you to become overheated.
- ✧ Avoid exercises that stress the abdominal muscles.
- ✧ Avoid exercises that require lying on your back (may disrupt circulation to the uterus).
- ✧ Every session should include a stretching warm-up before and warm-down afterward.
- ✧ Stretching should be very gentle because of hormonal softening of the joints.

Suggested Exercise Activities

- ✧ Swimming (Water aerobics are great for a pregnant woman.)
- ✧ Walking (Join a neighborhood walking club. Walk in a mall.)

- ✧ Yoga or Tai chi
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/tai-chi/SA00087>
- ✧ Low impact aerobics
- ✧ Dance, play, get lively.
- ✧ Kegel exercises are recommended during pregnancy.
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/kegel-exercises/WO00119>
- ✧ Regularly sit cross-legged on the floor. Practice squatting and duck walking.
- ✧ Back arches: get down on all fours. Slowly roll the buttocks down, arching the spine. Then relax and let spine sway downward. Repeat over and over in gentle rocking motion.
- ✧ Exercise-while-you work (or watch TV)
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/office-exercise/SM00115/NSECTIONGROUP=2>
<http://radiologytechnicianschools.net/50-simple-techniques-for-staying-fit-while-stuck-at-your-desk/>
<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/exercise-at-your-desk>
<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/fitness-for-couch-potatoes>

Times When You Should Not Exercise

- ✧ If the placenta is over or very close to the cervix, or if you have an incompetent cervix
- ✧ If you are experiencing premature labor
- ✧ If you have headaches, high blood pressure, or a persistent swelling of the entire body
- ✧ If you have a fever
- ✧ Warning signs (discontinue exercise if these symptoms appear): dizziness, disorientation, palpitations, chest pain, difficulty walking, nausea, bleeding or fluid discharge, regular strong contractions, cramps

Times When You Should Talk to Your Midwife Before Exercising

- ✧ If your baby isn't growing normally
- ✧ If you have asthma
- ✧ If you have diabetes or hyperinsulinemia
- ✧ If you are having irregular heartbeats
- ✧ If you are anemic
- ✧ If you have thyroid disease
- ✧ If you have had three or more spontaneous miscarriages
- ✧ If you are excessively over-or underweight
- ✧ If you have an extremely sedentary lifestyle

Remember that the increased energy expended while exercising will require extra nutrition and calories. Eat abundantly of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, high-quality protein and fats, and lots of fresh water.

Sources

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