Pregnancy - Common Symptoms and Care Tips
Article

Pregnancy Exercises - Staying Active and Healthy

JUN 13, 2022

It is okay to continue or begin regular physical activity if you are healthy and your pregnancy is normal.

Exercise During Pregnancy

Is it safe to exercise during pregnancy?[1]

if you are healthy and your pregnancy is normal:

- It is okay to continue or begin **regular physical activity** if you are healthy and your pregnancy is normal.
- Physical exercise does not **raise your chances of having a miscarriage**, having a baby with low birth weight, or having a baby too soon.
- During your early prenatal appointments, however, it is critical to discuss exercise with your obstetrician or another member of your health care team. If your doctor gives you the go-ahead to exercise, **you can talk about what activities you can perform safely.**



What are the benefits of exercise during pregnancy?[1]

- **Regular exercise during pregnancy has a number of advantages for both you and your fetus:**



  - Back discomfort is lessened.
  - Constipation is relieved.
  - Reduces your chances of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and caesarean birth.
  - Promotes a healthy pregnancy weight gain
  - Strengthens your heart and blood vessels while improving your overall fitness.
  - After your kid is born, it will assist you in losing the baby weight.

How much should I exercise during pregnancy?[1]

- Aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week for pregnant women.
- An aerobic exercise is one in which you work large muscles in your body in a rhythmic manner **(such as those in your legs and arms).**



- You're moving enough to get your **heart rate up and sweating at a moderate effort.** You can still converse normally, but you won't be able to sing.
- **Brisk walking and general gardening** (raking, weeding, or digging). are examples of moderate-intensity aerobic activities.
- You can divide **the 150 minutes into 30-minute workouts on 5 days of the week** or into smaller 10-minute workouts throughout each day.
- Start carefully and progressively increase **your activity if you are new to exercising.** Start small, with as little as **5 minutes every day.** Increase your activity by 5 minutes per week until you can keep active for 30 minutes per day.



- If you were quite active prior to becoming pregnant, **you can continue to do so with your obstetrician's permission.** If you lose weight, though, you may need to increase **the number of calories you consume.**
- If you begin an aerobic activity program (such as running, swimming, cycling, or aerobics classes), **inform the instructor that you are pregnant and start with no more than 15 minutes of continuous exercise 3 times per week.**Gradually up to daily 30-minute sessions.[2]



Exercise tips when you're pregnant:[2]

- Always **warm-up and cool down** before and after exercise.
- Try to stay active daily - **30 minutes of walking per day** is ideal, but if that isn't possible, any quantity is better than none.



- Avoid **intense exercise** in hot weather
- Drink **lots of water and other fluids.**



- If you go to exercise classes, make sure **your instructor is qualified and knows you're pregnant,** as well as how many weeks you're expecting.
- Try swimming because **the water will support your extra weight.**
- Horseback riding, downhill skiing, ice hockey, gymnastics, and cycling are all exercises that **should be done with caution.** Falls carry a risk of damage to your baby

Exercises to avoid in pregnancy[2]

- Because the weight of your bump presses on the main blood vessel delivering blood back to your heart, **you should avoid lying flat on your back** for long periods of time, especially after 16 weeks.
- Do not engage in contact sports, such as **kickboxing, judo, or squash where you may be hit.**
- Do not go scuba diving because **your baby is at risk of decompression sickness and gas embolism** (gas bubbles in the bloodstream).
- Do not exercise at altitudes **higher than 2,500 meters above sea level** because you and your baby are in danger of altitude sickness.

REFERENCES

1. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Exercise During Pregnancy Last reviewed: July 2019. Available at: https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/exercise-during-pregnancy. Last accessed on: 29/01/2022
2. NHS. Exercise in pregnancy. Page last reviewed: 20 January 2020. Available at: https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/exercise/#:~:text=Aim%20for%20at,on%20how%20to%20stay%20safe. Last accessed on: 29/01/2022

Benefits of Exercise During Pregnancy

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2. Exercise in pregnancy. Page last reviewed: 20 January 2020. Available at: https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/exercise/#:~:text=Keep%20up%20your%

20normal%20daily,in%20later%20pregnancy%20and%20labour. Last accessed at: 29/01/2022