

Third trimester to-dos and don'ts

Congratulations, you've made it to the finish line!

You will soon have a lovely new addition to your family. **You may have been feeling more tired and uneasy in recent weeks**, but you have a lot to look forward to!

Here are tips for the last trimester of pregnancy

THE DOS

Eat Healthily¹

- **It's critical to eat healthy foods** throughout your pregnancy to give your baby a healthy start.

- **Make sure your diet is varied and includes a variety of fresh fruits** and vegetables, as well as protein, iron, and calcium sources.

- Remember to drink **plenty of water as well**.

- Weight gain is a normal part of pregnancy, with **most women gaining between 11 and 16kg**.



Stay Active¹

- Try to stay active throughout your pregnancy, **even if you are in your third trimester**.

- While it's important to stick to safe, **gentle exercise as your due date approaches**, recommendations state that pregnant women without complications should engage in regular exercise **as part of a healthy lifestyle**.



Sleep Well.²

- Sleeping on your side is better from **28 weeks till your baby is born**.

- Sleeping on your side is ideal for **taking a quick nap on the couch or going to bed at night**.

- **By bending your knees and placing a pillow between them**, you can make it more comfortable and easier to stay on your side. You can also use a pillow to support your stomach.

- If you wake up and realize you've been sleeping on your back, **roll over onto your side**. If this occurs frequently, place a pillow behind your back to make rolling over onto your back more difficult.

- Some women prefer to sleep with their heads elevated, either with pillows for support or by raising the head of the bed slightly. **This can help to ease heartburn and snoring**.



- **You may notice that your back hurts more at night.**
 - Try to avoid heavy lifting, housework, and long periods of standing if at all possible.
 - And if possible, rest with your legs up during the day.

- **The frequency with which you need to pass urine at night may increase even more.**
 - The baby may be pressing on your bladder, and the hormones associated with the later stages of pregnancy can cause your pelvic floor to relax.

- Pelvic floor exercises will help you manage any 'leaks' and avoid continence issues in the future.



Maintain good sitting posture.³

- **Proper posture is especially important if you work at a desk. Here are some pointers to help you improve your posture:**

- Maintain proper body alignment while sitting, and avoid slouching or slumping. To avoid the swayback position, sit in a sturdy chair with low-back support and tilt your pelvis forward. Your knees should be slightly lower than your hips, and your feet should be flat on the ground.
- Choose a chair with soft arm rests that allow you to relax your shoulders and keep your elbows close to your body.
- Chairs on wheels should be used with caution because they may move as you sit or stand.
- It's also a good idea to get up and walk around every hour or so.
- Crossing your legs while seated should be avoided because it can impair circulation.



THE DON'TS

Avoid lying on your back.³

- When you lie on your back, **you put pressure on your major blood vessels**. This can reduce blood flow to your womb and limit your baby's oxygen supply.²

- It has been shown in studies that sleeping on your side **can cut the risk of stillbirth in half**.²

Avoid standing for long periods.³

- Here are some tips to help you maintain proper standing posture:

- It's preferable not to stand for long periods of time. Attempt to change your stance on a regular basis.
- When you must stand, keep your feet slightly apart and your knees from locking. Keep your pelvis tucked in at all times.
- Spot one foot on a small step stool if you must stand in one place for an extended period of time. This helps to relieve some of the strain on your lower back.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

- **While every woman's pregnancy is unique, you should consult your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:**⁴

- Heavily bled
- Headaches that are accompanied by spots, or flashing lights that do not go away
- Swelling that occurs suddenly or unexpectedly
- The fetal movement has been reduced (your baby should be moving every day)
- Your water has broken, but you are not experiencing contractions.
- Between contractions, there is constant pain.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Don't forget to do the following as you enter the third trimester:**¹

- Prepare a hospital bag
- book a tour of a hospital or birthing center
- set up a properly fitted car seat (to bring your baby home)
- Think about what you'll need when you bring your baby home – What will you buy, and will you be able to borrow from family or friends?
- Plan for the care of your other children (or pets) while you are in the hospital.
- Consider doing your shopping ahead of time, especially for non-perishable staples (tinned foods, bathroom products, etc.)
- Cook in double batches throughout your third trimester, and stock your freezer for when things get hectic once the baby is born.

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