

Exercising During Pregnancy

If you have been following a regular exercise program prior to your pregnancy, you should be able to maintain that program to some degree throughout your pregnancy. Exercise does not increase the risk for miscarriage in a normal low risk pregnancy.

If you are just starting an exercise program as a way of improving your health during your pregnancy, you should start very slowly and be careful not to over exert yourself. Consider a prenatal yoga class that is specifically designed for pregnant women.

- Listen to your body. Your body will naturally give you signals that it is time to reduce the level of exercise you are performing.
- Never exercise to the point of exhaustion or breathlessness. This is a signal that your baby and your body cannot get the oxygen they need.
- Wear comfortable shoes that give strong ankle and arch support.
- Take frequent breaks, and drink plenty of fluids during exercise.
- Avoid exercise in extremely hot weather.
- Avoid rocky terrain or unstable ground when running or cycling. Your joints are more lax in pregnancy, and ankle sprains and other injuries can occur.
- Contact sports should be avoided during pregnancy.
- Weight training should emphasize improving tone, especially in the upper body and abdominal area. Avoid lifting weights above your head and using weights that strain the lower back.
- During the second and third trimesters, avoid exercise that involves lying flat on your back as this can decrease blood flow to the uterus.
- Include stretching before and after your exercise program.
- Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables and complex carbohydrates.