

Exercise during Pregnancy – It's Beneficial and Encouraged

Regular exercise promotes a magnitude of health benefits in every day life, not just when we are pregnant. It is recommended that we spend 150mins per week on moderate intensity exercise and guess what this doesn't change during pregnancy. Just as your body changes during pregnancy, a few things about your exercise program may also change. Below we will discuss how to approach exercise throughout your pregnancy in a safe and beneficial way.

Why should I exercise during my pregnancy?

- Improve or maintain your fitness
- May reduce the risk of gestational diabetes and high blood pressure
- Improve your sleep quality
- Improve your mood now and even postnatally
- Prepare you for labour and minimize some pregnancy complications
- Manage pelvic girdle or lower back pain
- Help with constipation

When do I start and what is recommended?

Most women can exercise safely during their pregnancy, however it is best to consult with your midwife or doctor prior to starting a program. Exercise recommendations are;

- Aim for 150mins of moderate intensity exercise over a minimum of 3 days per week, ideally daily
- Try various types of exercise; aquatic, light resistance training, aerobic, yoga/stretching
- Pelvic floor exercises – page 2
- Your program should be based on your recent exercise ability and individualized for your current fitness level

What should I avoid or not do?

- Contact sports
- Excessive twisting or turning activities
- High impact activities such as jumping or bouncing
- Abdominal work that leads to breath holding without supervision from a health care professional
- Exercises lying on your back
- Any exercise that gives you pain, numbness or extreme fatigue



Safe Exercise Examples

- Walking
- Cycling
- Stretching
- Hydrotherapy
- Low impact aerobic
- Light weights
- Swimming

When to stop or seek advice

- Abdominal pain
- Amniotic fluid leakage
- Chest pain/tightness
 - Palpitations
 - Vaginal bleeding
- Regular, painful contractions
 - Dizziness
 - Calf pain or swelling
- Shortness of breath before exertion
- Persistent dizziness or faintness that does not resolve on rest