

- Exercise

Exercising during pregnancy is good for both you and the baby

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Women are encouraged to begin or continue exercising during pregnancy in order to reap the benefits, stay in shape and prepare for labour and delivery. Regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle will help you stay healthy and fit throughout your pregnancy. Exercising also improves posture and alleviates discomforts such as back pain and lethargy.



Regular exercise can help with back pain, constipation, bloating and swelling. It improves our mood, energy levels and sleep quality. It promotes muscle tone, strength and endurance while preventing excessive weight gain. Exercise promotes cardiovascular fitness, improves balance and posture, and reduces stress, anxiety and depression. It also keeps blood pressure stable and prevents gestational diabetes mellitus. It encourages vaginal delivery and decreases caesarean birth/operative delivery. It also aids in post-partum recovery and reduces urinary incontinence. Pregnant women should engage in at least four to five days per week of moderate-intensity physical activity such as brisk walking or yoga.

Over exertion may result in overheating which can affect the development of the baby. Hence, it is suggested to do workouts at moderate intensity. Low impact exercises are safe and beneficial. Walking is a great exercise for beginners. It provides moderate aerobic condition with minimal stress on joints. Resistance exercises with relatively lower weights/resistance bands, stretching exercises, yoga and pelvic floor muscle training are great exercises that can be done during pregnancy. All women with uncomplicated pregnancies can exercise regularly. Women with severe complications are advised not to do moderate workouts as well. These are women with severe anaemia, heart disease, severe hypertension, women diagnosed with placenta praevia or had episodes of unexplained bleeding. Avoid all activities where an injury or pressure on the abdomen is likely. Don't exhaust yourself and aim for 150 minutes of moderate exercise over a week. Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Wear loose and breathable clothing, keep your heart rate below 150 bpm, and remember to warm up. Do not exercise for more than 60 minutes at a time.

Balanced exercise can help cope with the physical changes of pregnancy and build stamina for the challenges ahead. Continue to exercise during pregnancy to enjoy benefits. Beginners can use pregnancy as a motivation to begin exercise.