

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.

*Information compiled from www.americanpregnancy.org