

Exercise during pregnancy

For healthy individuals during [pregnancies](#) without any complications, it is generally safe to engage in light to moderate regular physical activity. Physical activity during pregnancy is associated with minimal risks and has been shown to provide many benefits. However, be sure to speak to your health practitioner about the activities that can be done safely during pregnancy.

Health benefits of exercise during pregnancy

- Improves postpartum recovery
- Protects against excessive weight gain
- Protects against [gestational diabetes](#)
- Protects against hypertensive disorders (e.g., preeclampsia)
- Reduces low [back pain](#)
- Reduces risk of low birth weight in infant
- Reduces risk of preterm birth
- Reduces symptoms of [anxiety](#) and [depression](#)



Tips for exercising during pregnancy



Drink plenty of [water](#) before, during, and after exercise.

Water is essential for hydration and temperature regulation. During exercise, your body can lose several cups of water. To stay hydrated, it is important to ensure you drink enough water before, during, and after exercise.



Ensure you are eating enough to meet your [nutritional needs for exercise and pregnancy](#).

Your body has higher nutritional needs when you are pregnant. Ensure that you consume enough calories and nutrients in order to meet the needs of your exercise program as well as your pregnancy.



Get up slowly after doing any sitting or floor exercises.

Take your time getting up from sitting or lying positions in order to prevent dizziness.



Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing, activity-appropriate footwear, and a supportive bra.

A good-quality sports bra will help to support and protect your breasts. A belly support belt can also be worn later in pregnancy for extra comfort and support.

Exercise safely.

Follow the tips below to ensure you are exercising safely:



- Avoid exercising in hot and humid temperatures.
- Avoid jumping, hopping, skipping, twisting, and taking part in activities with an increased risk of falls or injury.
- Avoid holding your breath for an extended period of time.
- Be careful not to exercise to the point of exhaustion and don't engage in sporadic, intense bursts of exercise, followed by long periods of no physical activity.



Types of exercise that are safe during pregnancy

Type of exercise	Description
Resistance training	Resistance training such as lifting weights or using resistance bands strengthens bones and muscles.
Stationary biking/spinning	Riding a stationary bike or taking a spin class can be a great aerobic workout without the risk of falling associated with riding a standard bicycle.
Swimming/water aerobics	Water aerobics can provide a full body workout. The water supports body weight which can prevent injury and muscle strain.
Walking	Brisk walking or hiking can provide a gentle full body workout and is also easy on joints and muscles.
Yoga	Yoga, which focuses on stretching and breathwork, is known to reduce stress, increase strength, and improve mobility. There are also specific yoga classes designed for pregnant women.

Prenatal exercise apps

- Baby 2 Body ([App store](#), [Google play](#))
- Down Dog Prenatal Yoga ([App store](#), [Google play](#))
- FitOn ([App store](#), [Google play](#))
- ObeFitness ([App store](#), [Google play](#))

When to contact your practitioner

If you experience any of the symptoms below, stop exercising and contact your practitioner:

- Bleeding or excess fluid gushing from the vagina
- Calf pain or swelling
- Chest pain, heart palpitations, or unusual sensations in the chest
- Cramping or pain in the back or pelvic area
- Dizziness/lightheadedness
- Persistent contractions

References

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This handout was developed and medically reviewed by Fullscript's Integrative Medical Advisory team.
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Updated: December 2021