
Pregnancy and Exercise



General Guidelines

Exercise Prescription

The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
(ACOG) recommends at least
150 minutes of
moderate-intensity aerobic
activity per week.



Contraindications to Exercise

Consult your doctor if you have any of these medical conditions.

- Absolute
 - Pregnancy induced hypertension
 - Restrictive lung disease
 - Placenta praevia
 - Incompetent cervix
 - Heart disease
- Relative
 - Pre-eclampsia
 - Severe anaemia
 - Type 1 diabetes
 - ○ Thyroid abnormality

Warning Signs

If you experience any of these symptoms, stop exercising immediately.

- Significant fatigue or muscle weakness
- Vaginal bleeding
- Abdominal pain
- Swelling of the ankles, calves, hands, or face
- Dizziness or fainting
- Leakage of amniotic fluid
- Elevated heart rate or blood pressure that doesn't return to normal within 30 minutes of cessation

First Trimester Exercises and Precautions

Precautions

It's best to establish a safe and consistent exercise routine during your first trimester.

- Make sure you stay hydrated
- Don't partake in exercises with a high risk of falling
- Avoid high intensity and contact sports
- Adjust your expectations

Exercise

Exercise during the first trimester can help with many early symptoms of pregnancy.

- **Benefits**
 - Can reduce morning sickness, reduce fatigue, improve mood, and regulate weight gain
 - Exercises should lead to light sweating and slight increase in HR
 - Listen to your body as you adjust to the physical changes of your body

Low Intensity Weight Training



- **Benefit includes:** helps to improve overall strength which aides in stability and reduced risk of falling.
- When weightlifting, it is best to avoid:
 - Lying flat on your back
 - Lifting weights directly over the belly
 - Heavy weights

Jogging



- **Benefits include:** improved cardiovascular function, limited weight gain, reduction of gestational diabetes and hypertension
- Things to remember while jogging:
 - Maintain a neutral posture
 - Watch out for pelvic or abdominal discomfort
 - Keep a conversational pace

Kegel

ester 3



- **Benefits include:** help maintain control of bladder function, and strengthen your uterus, vagina, bowels, and bladder
- Exercise routine can involve 10-20 contractions for 5-10 seconds. Relax your muscles between each contraction.

Second Trimester Exercises and Precautions

Precautions

Always ask your healthcare provider before starting anything new.

- Do not start new, rigorous exercises.
- Do not overdo it - make sure to modify workouts to lessen the burden on joints and muscles.
- Try to avoid standing for long periods

Exercises

In the second trimester, there is an increase in uterus size and pressure in the abdominal area.

- Can reduce backache, constipation, improve sleep and mood, and improve muscle tone
- Try to aim for around 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day

Pilates



BENEFITS:

- low impact exercise
- combines flexibility and strength training
- improves posture, balance, and movement

Exercise Ball



BENEFITS:

- Strengthens core muscles
- Maintains postures

Standing Ab Workouts



BENEFITS:

- Improves balance and enhance core strength
- Reduces risks of hurting your lower back

Third Trimester Exercises and Precautions

Precautions

Movements to avoid during the third trimester of pregnancy.

AVOID:

- intra-abdominal pressure (holding your breath)
- quick changes of direction.
- downward facing moves
- direct ab workouts
- HIIT workouts
- jumping, hopping, skipping, bouncing

Exercises

Exercising is recommended for women in their third trimester, with modifications.

- Focus on low impact workouts
- Benefits include cardiovascular fitness, stable mood, and weight control
- Balance is more difficult because joints become loose
→ exercises that stabilize joints are great for injury prevention

Walking



BENEFITS:

- simple, accessible, free
- tones body and helps cardiovascular health

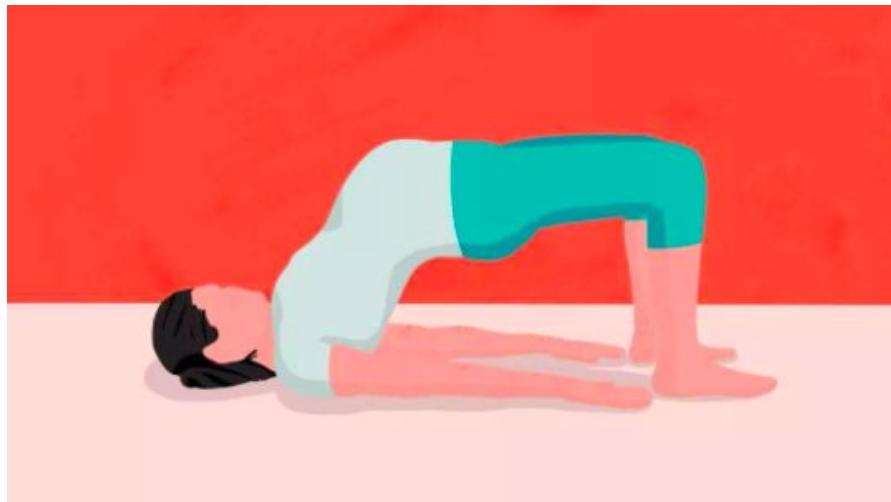
Aqua Aerobics



BENEFITS:

- takes pressure off
- total body exercises
- walk/jog/Zumba

Yoga



BENEFITS:

- targets major muscle groups
- modified poses are important
- can ease anxiety and depression

Postpartum Exercise

Precautions

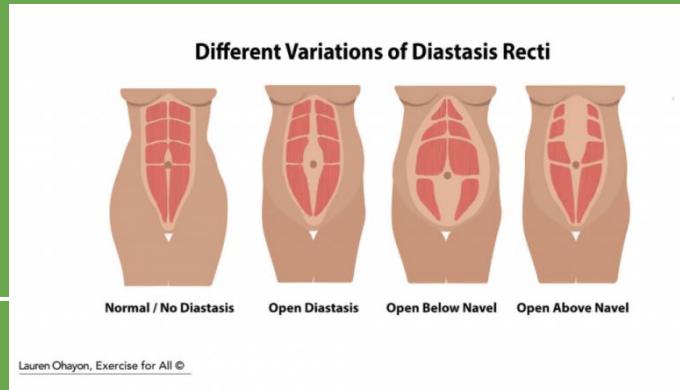
Things to be aware of postpartum.

- Diastasis recti
 - 2/3 of pregnant women have it
 - Belly sticks out because the space between your left and right abdominal muscles widen out
 - More common in women over 35, heavier babies, and multiple pregnancies
- Perineum soreness
 - Sore after birth, may stretch and tear during labor

Diastasis Recti Exercises

Many of the following exercises focus on the Transverse Abdominis (TVA) muscle.

- It's important to breathe and engage your pelvic floor when doing these exercises.
- Skip any movement or exercise that places strain on the midline or causes the belly to bulge outward, like sit-ups and planks





Pelvic Tilts on Hands and Knees

Perform 10 tilts, moving slowly and consciously.

1. Begin on hands and knees in a neutral spine.
2. Take a big inhale into the sides of your ribcage, then exhale with a kegel, drawing your tailbone down and under into a curled spine.
3. Inhale as you return to neutral. Be sure to relax your glutes and move from your lower abs. Cow position (arching upwards) is not advised for severe diastasis recti.
4. Perform 10 tilts, moving slowly and consciously.

Toe Taps Lying on Back

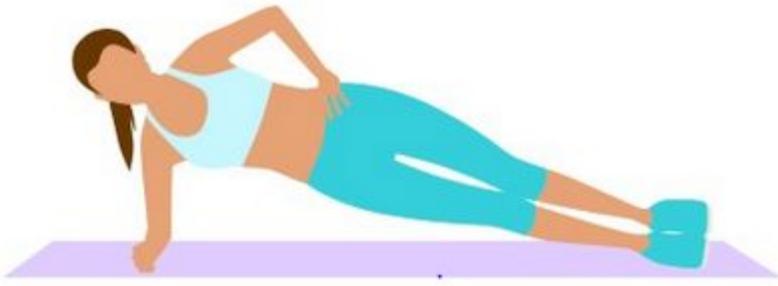
Perform 10 reps on each side.



1. Lying flat on your back, bring legs to a tabletop position, with knees directly over your hips. Be sure you aren't arching your back or tucking your pelvis.
2. Inhale into your ribcage and exhale as you tap your right foot down to the floor, drawing in your core and maintaining pelvic alignment.
3. Inhale as you return to neutral.
4. Perform 10 reps on each side.

Side Planks

Keep breathing and drawing in your core as you hold this pose. Don't hold for longer than 15-20 seconds to start.



1. Place your elbow directly underneath your shoulder and stack your top leg in front of your back leg, so both feet are touching the floor.
2. Make sure your shoulders and hips are stacked so they are in line with your head and feet.
3. Keep breathing and drawing in your core as you hold this pose. Don't hold for longer than 15-20 seconds to start.

Exercise and Wellness

Things you can do to help with
postpartum pains.

- Kegel exercises
- Ice perineum area
- Use pillows or donut shaped
cushions when sitting
- Don't lift from a squatting
position, this can cause pain
