

HOW TO EXERCISE WHILE PREGNANT

WHAT TO DO TO STAY FIT AND HEALTHY

Yes, you can stay lean while growing (and growing, and growing) a baby. Here's how to do it safely.

EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY OFFERS BIG, LASTING BENEFITS

Larger placenta and more nutrients for your baby



Lower risk of gestational diabetes and Caesarian delivery

Increased fitness for labor, delivery, and toting around your new baby



Faster return to pre-pregnancy weight

Leaner children up to five years after birth



Aim to get at least half an hour of exercise each day while you're pregnant.

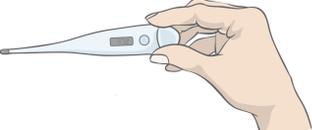
WAYS TO KEEP YOUR WORKOUTS SAFE

Just as important as exercising during pregnancy: not overdoing it. Follow these guidelines to get it right.



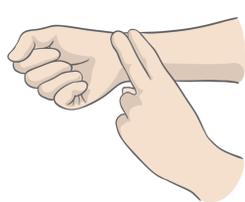
ADJUST YOUR GOALS

Don't go crazy with the intensity. Rather than focusing on gaining muscle or losing fat, aim to maintain fitness while gaining a healthy, but not excessive, amount of weight.



MANAGE YOUR BODY TEMPERATURE

Keep your body temperature under 100°F (38°C), especially during the third trimester. Avoid exercise in extremely hot or humid conditions (including hot yoga). And remember to hydrate.



KEEP HEART RATE IN CHECK

A good rule of thumb: You should be able to carry on a conversation without getting out of breath.

BEST AND WORST EXERCISES FOR PREGNANCY

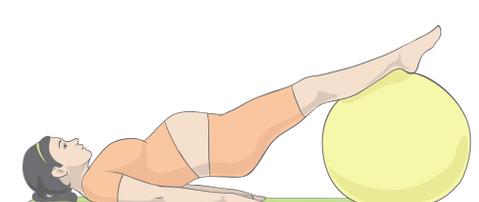


Choose activities that create less joint stress: swimming, stair climbing, walking, the elliptical machine, and the stationary bike.



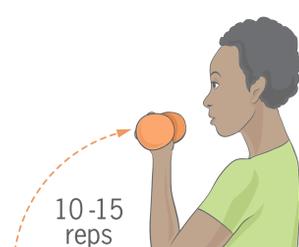
Avoid high-impact activities that could injure your joints or your baby: contact sports, skiing, sprinting, and plyometrics.

Contrary to what you've probably heard, weight training is fine.



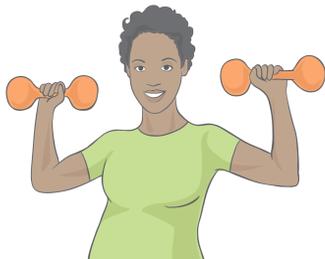
SUPPORT YOUR SPINE

Choose exercises that require you to use your core muscles. Opt for free weights or body-weight exercises (not machines) to maintain a neutral spine position.



DECREASE WEIGHT, INCREASE REPS

Doing higher reps (10-15) at 65-75% of your one-rep maximum helps you maintain normal breathing and avoid stressing your joints.



USE YOUR MUSCLES

Avoid using momentum to move the weights; make sure to lift and lower with your prime mover muscles.



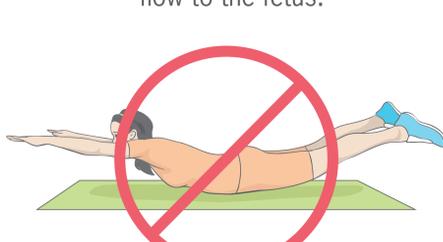
BREATHE NATURALLY

Avoid the Valsalva maneuver, where you forcefully exhale without actually releasing air. It may decrease oxygen flow to the fetus.



WORK YOUR CORE

Back and hip pain tend to increase during pregnancy. Exercises that brace the core (front and side bridges) can strengthen that musculature and reduce pain.



STAY UPRIGHT

After the first trimester, avoid lying flat on your back (e.g., for bench presses), which can diminish blood flow to your brain and uterus. Pressure on the stomach is also a no.

If you're new to exercise, start very slow. Seek out a fitness professional well-versed in working with pregnant women. And make sure you're also taking care of your nutrition.