

Exercise in Pregnancy



- Drink plenty of water before, during and after exercising, particularly in very hot or humid weather. That goes for swimming too, even though you may not feel dehydrated. An increase in core body temperatures in early pregnancy can cause fetal defects, and dehydration in late pregnancy is associated with premature labor.
- Always include a warm-up and cool-down when putting muscles to work. Gentle stretches will prevent strains, joint injuries and muscle cramps.
- Dress in comfortable clothes that wick sweat and keep you cool. Shoes for running, jogging and walking should have good cushioning under the heel to avoid injuries to the foot or Achilles tendon. Bras should provide good support.
- Don't over flex or overextend the knee joints, as with deep-knee bends, unless your body is well-conditioned for these motions. Knee joints are more prone to injury because of the pregnancy hormone relaxin, which softens ligaments and tendons.
- Stop exercising immediately if you experience symptoms such as chest pains, vaginal bleeding or uterine contractions, or if your membranes rupture (water breaks).
- Remember to eat a balanced diet, preferable five or six small meals or snacks per day, to replace the calories and glucose used by your working muscles during exercise. Metabolism speeds up during pregnancy anyway.
- Avoid exercises on your back after the first trimester or whenever you feel dizzy, lightheaded or nauseated. The weight of your uterus puts pressure on the vein responsible for returning blood from the lower body to the heart.