



I'm pregnant.

Should I exercise?

www.healthypregnancyBC.ca

Yes, the most up-to-date advice is that physical activity is safe during pregnancy. In fact, there are *more* health risks if you are *not* active. Being physically active most days is a part of a healthy pregnancy.

If you *were not* physically active before pregnancy:

Many women think of pregnancy as a great time to make new healthy habits. Use this time to make daily physical activity a life-long habit for both you and your child.

Start easy and progress gradually:

- Talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program
- The type of activity you choose is up to you – choose activities that you enjoy.
- Build physical activity into your daily routine. Plan how you will include it in your day and week.
- Start with mild activities such as walking and swimming. Even 5 minutes a day will help. For example, take the stairs instead of the elevator or get off the bus a few stops early and walk the rest of the way.
- Gradually increase the time you're active to 30 minutes a day. This can be all at once or as 10 minute blocks of time.

If you *were* physically active before pregnancy:

- Keep being active most days of the week.
- If you are not feeling up to your usual activities, find ways to include activity into your daily routine. For example, park your car at the far end of the parking lot. Being active for even 10 minutes at a time counts.

Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity most days.

Being active can:

- improve your mood
- decrease stress
- increase your energy levels
- promote a healthy weight
- promote better sleep
- increase your muscle tone, strength, and endurance
- prepare your body for birth
- speed up your recovery after labour and delivery

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Tips for Exercising Safely

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Don't overdo it.

You should be able to carry on a normal conversation while you are active.

Modify or replace weight-bearing activities.

Modify or replace activities such as running, high-impact aerobics, hiking, and tennis as your pregnancy progresses.

Hormones make your joints looser in pregnancy.

In your second and third trimesters, avoid exercises that involve quick changes of direction.

As your pregnancy progresses, your centre of gravity will shift and you may lose your balance more easily.

When doing exercises that involve balance, have something nearby to hold onto, for example a chair, if you start to lose your balance.

Keep cool and hydrated.

Drink lots of water before, during, and after physical activity to avoid overheating and dehydration. Avoid being active outdoors on very hot or humid days.

Taking care of myself

I wasn't the fitness-type before I was pregnant. But I wanted to do everything I could to be healthy for my baby. So, I started going to the prenatal yoga class at my local Rec. centre. I loved how de-stressed I felt after class. And, I've met other Moms-to-be. Now two or three of us meet up and walk together on Mondays and Wednesdays. What started out as something I was doing for the baby ended up being one of my favourite parts of my day.

For more information, visit www.healthypregnancyBC.ca

