



## Exercise Tips During Pregnancy

Most health care providers agree that moderate exercise is safe and beneficial during pregnancy. Women who exercise are more physically fit and generally have more stamina than women who are sedentary. Women who are physically fit may have shorter and easier labors and fewer cesarean sections, than women who aren't fit.

### Approval

A pregnant woman should always get her health care provider's approval before starting an exercise program, especially if she has had miscarriages or premature deliveries in the past, or if she has high blood pressure or heart disease.

Women who did not exercise before pregnancy should stick to moderate walking or swimming and limit exercise sessions to 30 minutes or less.

Women who have been exercising regularly should plan to exercise a little less vigorously when pregnant. A pregnant woman's heart rate will increase faster than it did before she was pregnant. It's best to exercise at a moderate pace, just enough to raise the heart rate to no more than 140 beats per minute.

### Safety During Pregnancy

Here are some tips that will help pregnant women exercise safely during pregnancy:

- Avoid exercises that require lying on your back.
- Avoid getting overheated, especially on hot, humid days. Overheating is bad for the baby.
- Stay away from weightlifting, horseback riding, diving, downhill skiing and strenuous aerobic exercise, such as long-distance running.
- Remember that during pregnancy, the body is more prone to injury from stretching or bouncing movements.
- Get immediate medical attention if cramping, bleeding or contractions occur during or after exercise.

There's no question that moderate exercise during pregnancy makes for healthier mothers and babies. If you'd like to benefit from exercise during your pregnancy, ask your health care provider for advice on a program that's right for you and your baby.