

## Exercise During Pregnancy - Pregnancy Planner

In any stage of your life, exercise is a part of a healthy lifestyle and pregnancy should not interfere with this. As busy as you may be, it is important for you to make the time to exercise. After all, research has shown that women who exercise while pregnant not only tend to have smoother pregnancies, but they may also experience easier labors, and feel better about themselves during pregnancy and after delivery.

Like many pregnant women, you probably wonder just how much exercise is safe, how you should do it, and at what intensities. As with all exercise programs, you should check with your own health care provider to be sure that there is no reason that you should not embark on or continue an exercise program.

### *Exercise Guidelines*

Here are some guidelines which should be followed for a safe and healthy exercise program for pregnant women:

- During pregnancy, woman can continue mild to moderate exercise routines. It is best to exercise regularly-at least three times per week.
- Non-weight-bearing exercise, such as cycling or swimming, may be the easiest to continue throughout pregnancy and may reduce the risk of injury. However, weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, may also be continued at close to your normal intensity level.
- After twenty weeks of pregnancy, avoid doing any exercise on your back, as this may decrease blood flow to the uterus.
- Avoid moderate exercise in hot, humid weather, or when you are sick with a fever.
- Wear comfortable clothing that will help you to remain cool.
- Wear a bra that fits you well and gives you plenty of support to help protect your breasts.
- Drink plenty of water to help keep you from overheating or dehydrating.
- Pregnant women need an additional 300 calories each day. Women who exercise during pregnancy should be especially careful to ensure adequate diet.

### *Exercise Warning Signs*

While exercising during pregnancy, listen to your body and signs it may be giving you. Stop exercising and call your health care provider if you experience any of these symptoms while exercising (note: call even if you experience these symptoms when not exercising):

- pain
- vaginal bleeding
- increased shortness of breath
- rapid heartbeat
- difficulty walking
- uterine contractions and/or chest pains
- fluid leaking from the vagina