

Should you exercise during pregnancy?



Regular exercise has been shown to have numerous positive health effects for both mom and baby

Who should exercise?

Exercise is **strongly recommended** for **all healthy women** with no pregnancy complications

If you are unsure, consult your doctor or midwife



What are the benefits of exercise?

Lowers risk of gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, excessive weight gain, and depression.

DOES NOT increase risk of miscarriage, premature birth, or delivering an underweight baby



How much should you exercise?

150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise over a minimum of **3 days** a week



What type of exercise?

Moderate-level:

- Aerobic exercise
- Resistance training
- Stretching or yoga

What is Moderate Level?

During moderate physical activity you should be able to **speak comfortably**; if you can't, lower the intensity



What about pregnancy in competitive athletes?

There is not enough research to provide clear guidelines for exercise above a moderate intensity level

- Women interested in continuing high-level physical activity should speak with their obstetrical care provider or a sport and exercise medicine physician
- There is no clear evidence that high-level physical activity in the 1st trimester increases risk of miscarriage



Are there any exercises to avoid?

Avoid activities that make you feel unwell

May include activities that involve lying on your back or forceful contractions of your core (when lifting heavy objects)

Avoid activities in dangerous environments or where falls or hits to the belly can occur

Including hot yoga, outdoor cycling, and many team sports

How to stay safe if engaging in high-intensity exercise?

- Avoid activity that increases body temperature above 39°C
- Engage pelvic floor muscles during heavy lifting to avoid downward pressure
- Pay extra attention to technique to avoid injuries and joint/back pain as ligaments become looser during pregnancy
- Talk to your doctor about the possibility of more frequent check-ups and other safety considerations

If unsure, please speak with your obstetrical care provider or a sport and exercise medicine physician

For more information: <https://sportsandexercisemedicine.ca/tips/>

