



Physical Activity Guidelines for Pregnant Women

Did You Know?

You can get the benefits of physical activity by splitting it up into 10 minute segments.

30 minutes at a time might sound like a hefty goal, so try and aim for three 10 minute bouts spread throughout the day.



There are numerous benefits to moderate-intensity exercise during pregnancy and the risks to the woman and baby are very low. Aim to accumulate 150 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity each week and spread this throughout the week, such as 30 minutes per day on 5 days during the week.

Pregnancy is not the time to try out a new type of physical activity. However, if you engaged in vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise (example: running) prior to pregnancy, you may be able to continue with this activity if it is approved by your health care provider. Modifications may need to be made to your routine as the pregnancy progresses, too.

What is moderate-intensity exercise? Walking at a brisk pace, riding a stationary bike at a speed of less than 10 miles per hour, and light gardening are all examples. At moderate-intensity your heart rate will be elevated but you can still have a conversation. If you are breathing so hard that you cannot have a conversation, the intensity is likely to be considered vigorous.

Talk to your healthcare provider! It is a good idea to talk with your doctor or healthcare provider about the amount and type of physical activity that is best for you during your pregnancy. They can provide you with specifics based on your individual needs.

What exercises should typically be avoided? Contact sports and other activities that could be dangerous such as horseback riding, downhill skiing, bicycling outside, and ball sports such as soccer and basketball should be avoided during pregnancy. After the first trimester, also avoid exercises that involve lying on your back, such as abdominal crunches.

The benefits during pregnancy are numerous! Being physically active during pregnancy may decrease the risk of gestational diabetes and preeclampsia (high blood pressure during pregnancy), and may also decrease the length of labor. Other potential benefits include better sleep, increased self-esteem, and faster recovery after labor.

It is important to listen to your body and monitor how you feel throughout your pregnancy as you engage in physical activity.