



مؤسسة الرعاية الصحية الأولية
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CORPORATION

Exercises during Pregnancy





Exercise during pregnancy is well recognized as being both a safe and beneficial practice for mother and fetus.

The body changes that occur in a woman while she is pregnant may interfere with the ability to engage in some types of exercise.

Some safe exercises during pregnancy:

1- Foot Exercise:

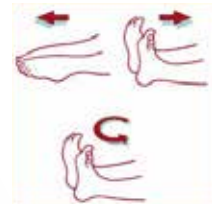
A. Foot and Ankle Exercise:

Excess retention of fluid during pregnancy can lead to varicose veins, vulva veins and cramps. This exercise will help prevent swollen ankles and reduce the incidence of varicose veins.

Technique:

- Rest the legs in an elevated position by keeping a small chair, just of enough height to keep one's legs parallel to the ground
- Keep both knees and ankles relaxed
- Start to bend and stretch the ankles for (30-45) seconds
- Do imaginary circles with your feet, ten circles in one direction and do ten more in the opposite direction

It is advised to do the above exercise at least 10 times a day.



B. Step Up Exercise:

This exercise helps to strengthen thighs, hip flexors, hamstrings and glottal muscles.

Technique:

- Start by standing with feet a little less than shoulder-width apart, about a foot in front of a step which is approximately 12-18 inches high. Allow arms to hang comfortably down by sides.
- Keep back straight and step up with left leg.
- With a steady and controlled motion, slowly pull up onto the bench using only left leg.
- Step down off the step with right foot first and then the left foot and return to the starting position.
- Repeat this action, alternating the leading leg each time.



Do approximately 20 - 30 total repetitions.





2- Deep Breathing Exercises:

It helps to strengthen the diaphragm and increase oxygenation of the blood. In addition, this exercise is good for relaxing and is an effective pain-reducing technique.

Technique:

- Start with a completely empty lung
- Begin by closing one nostril and taking a deep breath through the other nostril
- Try to fill lungs with as much air as possible
- Hold for a few seconds
- Breathe out through the same nostril
- Repeat the process with the other nostril closed
- It is advised to hold your breath in full inspiration for six seconds for optimum benefit

Do the following exercises at least 6-8 times per day while performing foot exercises.

3- Stomach Strengthening Exercises:

As your baby gets bigger, you may find that the hollow space in your lower back increases and this can cause backache. These exercises strengthen stomach (abdominal) muscles and ease backache, which can be a problem in pregnancy.

Technique:

- Start in a box position (on all fours) with knees under hips, hands under shoulders, fingers facing forward and abdominals lifted to keep your back straight.
- Pull in your stomach muscles and raise your back up towards the ceiling, curling the trunk and allowing your head to relax gently forward don't let your elbows lock.
- Hold for a few seconds then slowly return to the box position.
- Take care not to bend your back inward: it should always return to a straight/neutral position.
- Only move your back as far as you can comfortably.
- Do this slowly and rhythmically (10 times), making your muscles work hard and moving your back carefully.



4- Pelvic Floor Exercises:

If your pelvic muscles are weak, urine will leak when you cough, sneeze or are strained. It is known as stress incontinence. This condition may continue after pregnancy. This exercise helps to strengthen the muscles of your pelvic floor and reduce or avoid stress incontinence after pregnancy.

Technique:

- Close your anus as if you're trying to prevent a bowel movement and at the same time, draw in your vagina as if you're gripping a tampon, and your urethra as if to stop the flow of urine.
- At first, do this exercise quickly, tightening and releasing the muscles immediately.
- Then do it slowly, holding the contractions for as long as you can before you relax try to count to (10).
- It is advised to do three sets of eight squeezes every day and to do them once at each meal.
- As well as these exercises, practice tightening up the pelvic floor muscles before and during coughing and sneezing.



5- Pelvic Tilt Exercises:

This exercise is specifically for the third trimester because it improves posture, strengthens the abdomen, soothes backaches during pregnancy and labor and facilitates easy delivery.

Technique:

- Stand with your shoulders and bottom against a wall
- Keep your knees soft
- Pull your tummy button towards your spine, so that your back flattens against the wall; hold for four seconds and release



Repeat up to 10 times

6- Other Exercises:



Other exercises can be performed throughout the pregnancy, however, decreasing the intensity of exercises should be considered as the pregnancy progresses.

- Walking
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Aerobics
- Yoga



DO NOT DO THESE EXERCISES:

- Avoid any strenuous exercise.
- Avoid lying on your back for long periods after the first trimester, as you may feel faint from the pressure that your uterus puts on the vena cava. If you feel faint while on your back, roll over your side to re-establish blood flow.
- Avoid horse back riding, downhill skiing, ice hockey, gymnastics, soccer, basketball, vigorous racquet sports and cycling, because there is a high risk of falling or abdominal trauma.

Precautions:

- Exercises should be decreased or slow down as your pregnancy progresses. It is advised that you seek medical help if you have any doubt about your condition.
- If you are doing step aerobics, make sure that the step is no higher than four inches off the ground.

Recommendations:

- Do regular and gradual exercise.
- Always warm up before exercising, and cool down afterwards.
- Try to keep active on a daily basis: a (30 minute) of walk each day can be enough.
- Drink plenty of water and other fluids such as fresh juices and dairy products.

You can do it. ..

By exercising during pregnancy, you are giving the **BEST** of health to yourself and your baby.

No more worrying about returning to your pre-pregnancy weight.

HAVE FUN, it is SAFE.



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