



Pregnancy

NUTRITION PROGRAM

Why 30 minutes a day can have an impact on a lifetime

You're pregnant so you should rest and avoid exercise, right? Wrong! The common notion that exercise during pregnancy might harm your child has been discredited. In fact, the opposite is true,

and doing some moderate physical activity – even if it’s just a walk around the park – has numerous benefits for you and your child.

3 mins

to read

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5 great reasons to be active for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 times a week

- 1. Helps keep your pregnancy weight gain in check.**
- 2. Can improve your mood!**
- 3. May help you have a shorter labour.**
- 4. Might make the birth easier thanks to stronger muscles and greater cardiovascular fitness.**
- 5. Can help improve your health and fitness level.**

No need to quit

What sort of exercise you do during pregnancy is all about what you did before you conceived. If you’re healthy and have always exercised and kept fit, there’s no need to stop now. Check with your healthcare provider, but chances are you can probably carry on with your usual workouts and levels of intensity during most of your pregnancy.

Move more, sit less

If you led more of a sedentary lifestyle before you got pregnant, it may be time to start to get active now. In fact, some experts recommend it! You might want to choose something gentle such as swimming or walking, and build up how long and how often you exercise. Discuss what you plan to do with your healthcare provider.

What to avoid and what to adapt

Steer clear of exercise where you might fall or injure your abdominal area. So cycling, basketball, soccer, horseback riding, kickboxing, and skiing are out. But aerobics, spinning, swimming, running, and walking (with small changes where necessary) can still be in.

Importantly, you should avoid exercises that involve lying on your back during your second and third trimesters. This is because the weight of your growing child presses on the main blood vessel bringing blood back to your heart and this can make you feel faint. If you regularly do a class where some of the exercises are done on your back, ask your instructor for alternatives.

As your child grows and you feel heavier, you’ll probably have to make some small tweaks to your routines but you don’t need to stop completely. Try squatting instead of jumping in aerobics classes, adjusting the position of your bike when spinning and running on smooth, flat surfaces to reduce your risk of stumbling.

Consider pregnancy exercise classes such as yoga and Pilates – as well as being specifically designed

around you and your growing child, they allow you to meet other moms-to-be, which can be fun and motivating!

Eating and drinking for an active lifestyle

Staying active, combined with eating a balanced, healthy diet, can help you keep your weight gain under control. Not only will nutrient-dense food containing protein, carbohydrates, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals support the healthy development and growth of your baby, it will also give you the energy you need to be active.

It's easy to get overheated when you exercise so make sure you keep a bottle of water handy during and after your physical activity. In addition to the water you need for exercise, aim to drink about 2 litres of fluid every day – that's around eight cups.

Sources

Committee Opinion. Committee on Obstetric Practice. Physical activity and exercise during pregnancy and the postpartum period. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists 2015; 650.

www.acog.org

www.cdc.gov

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