

Pregnancy: How to Exercise Safely

Exercise during pregnancy is good for you.

It can help you have more energy and get better sleep.

And it can help relieve back pain, swelling, and other discomforts that can come with being pregnant.

And exercise prepares your muscles for childbirth.

Moderate exercise is safe during most pregnancies.

But if you weren't exercising on a regular basis before your pregnancy, be sure to talk with your doctor or midwife before you start.

In the first few months of your pregnancy, you may be able to do many of the same types of exercise that you did before you became pregnant.

As your pregnancy progresses, you may find that it's more comfortable to change the type, or intensity, of exercise you do.

This might mean changing from activities like running to things that are gentler on your body, like walking or swimming.

This can also be a good time to try a prenatal exercise class.

If you're used to strenuous exercise, ask your doctor how to know when it's time to slow down.

It's important to listen to your body.

If you feel tired, take it easy.

You can stay safe when you exercise by following a few simple guidelines.

Avoid getting overheated.

And drink plenty of water before, during, and after exercise.

Avoid activities where you might fall or hurt your belly.

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This includes contact sports, like soccer and basketball, as well as mountain biking, skating, skiing, and horseback riding.

It's also important to avoid activities that are higher risk during pregnancy.

These include scuba diving and exercising at high altitudes.

If you live at a high altitude, talk to your doctor or midwife about how you can exercise safely.

After your fourth month of pregnancy, avoid exercises that require you to lie flat on your back.

This includes sit-ups and some yoga poses.

Your doctor or midwife may be able to suggest alternatives to those types of exercises.

Staying active is a way to care for yourself throughout your pregnancy.

And with a few precautions, you can exercise safely right up to your delivery.

Remember, if you have any questions, your doctor or midwife is there to support you.