



# Exercises To Do When You Are Pregnant

**These exercises are good for pregnant women to do:**

## 1. Kegel Exercises

### Before the 4th month:

- Lie on your back. Put a pillow under your head and neck.
- Let your arms lie next to your sides
- Bend your knees. Put feet about 12 inches apart. Keep your soles flat on the floor.
- Squeeze tight the muscles around your vagina and anus. Hold these muscles tight for about 5–10 seconds. You can find these muscles when you pee (urinate). Stop the flow for a second. Those are the muscles you want to tighten and relax.
- Slowly let your muscles relax
- Do Kegels up to 10-20 times in a row, at least 3 times each day

### After the 4th month:

- Stand or sit to do Kegels
- Do not lie on your back. Your growing uterus can put too much weight on the large blood vessels in your back. You and your baby may not get enough oxygen if you lay on your back.
- Do Kegels up to 10-20 times in a row, at least 3 times each day

## 2. Pelvic Tilt

### Before the 4th month:

- Lie on your back on the floor
- Press the small of your back against the floor while you let out your breath
- Relax your spine while you take in a deep breath
- Repeat this 5 times, twice a day, when possible



### After the 4th month:

- Stand against a wall
- Press your back next to the wall while you let out your breath
- Then relax your spine while you take a deep breath
- Repeat this 5 times, twice a day, when possible
- Do not lie on your back. Your growing uterus can put too much weight on the large blood vessels in your back.

## 3. Angry Cat

### Do this to take the weight of your uterus off your spine.

- Get on your hands and knees. Make your back flat.
- Keep your head and neck straight
- Arch up your back like an angry cat. Pull in your tummy muscles.
- Hold for 3 seconds
- Then relax. Make your back flat again.
- Do this 5 or 6 times each day. You can also do it when you are in labor.



# Stay Active When You Are Pregnant

## Here are good things to do when you are pregnant:

- Walk
- Swim (The water should not be too hot or too cold)
- Bicycle (You may want to use a stationary bike to protect you from falls that can happen as your uterus gets bigger)
- Do Kegel exercises (See the handout *Exercises To Do When You Are Pregnant*)
- Go to exercise classes for pregnant women
- Try to relax. You can sit in a chair or lay on your side. Breathe in through your nose. Breathe slowly out through your mouth.

## If you were used to being active before you were pregnant, you may be able to:

- Jog up to 2 miles per day
- Swim
- Do exercises of low to moderate intensity for prenatal or postpartum women
- Lift weights (Do not hold your breath while you lift the weights)
- Ski cross-country below 10,000 feet
- Hike

## When you are pregnant, you should NOT:

- Do exercises that might harm the abdomen
- Do exercises that involve jerky, bouncy motions
- Jog more than 2 miles per day
- Play contact sports like football or karate
- Ride horseback

## It can also be dangerous to:

- Water ski, dive, surf, or scuba dive
- Ski downhill
- Bicycle when the ground is wet
- Skate



Always talk with your doctor before you start an exercise program. It is a good idea to try to exercise at least 30 minutes every day.



## Keep Safe When You Exercise

### Call your health care provider right away if you:

- Feel pain when you exercise
- Feel dizzy
- Are short of breath
- Think you might faint

### There are other warning signs to watch for.

- Bleed or leak fluid from your vagina
- Have a rapid heartbeat when you rest
- Have a hard time walking
- Have pain or swelling in your calf
- Have contractions
- Have chest pains
- Have a headache

### Follow these safety tips:

- Don't do anything that could hurt your abdomen. Stay away from karate and other contact sports.
- Avoid becoming overheated. Don't exercise in hot weather. Wear light clothing.
- Don't lie on your back after you are 4 months pregnant
- Stay away from activities that could lead to falls
- Don't do full sit-ups or leg lifts with both legs
- Bend your knees when you touch your toes
- Don't stand still for long periods of time

### Get the food and water you need when you exercise:

- Drink plenty of water. You will need at least 8 glasses of water a day when you are pregnant.
- Drink extra water when you exercise
- Eat plenty of healthy food. Eat a healthy snack after you exercise.

### After you give birth:

- Talk with your doctor about when to start to exercising again
- Go back to your exercise program slowly, as you feel you can
- Start out easy in the first few days after your baby is born
- Exercise longer and a little harder day by day



### When you exercise, remember:

- You should be able to talk normally while exercising. If you are not able to have a normal conversation, you are causing your heart to work too hard.
- When you get tired, stop.
- Do not jerk, bounce, or jump.