



Prenatal Fitness

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If you've not exercised before, pregnancy is not the best time to get started! In this case, it's better & safer to just stick to a good, old walk & a few prenatal exercises.

For those who have been working out prior to getting pregnant, barring a few exceptions, it's fine to continue with low impact aerobics, pilates, yoga, swimming, etc, with appropriate modifications to the same, keeping the needs of pregnancy in mind.

Activities which put one at risk of tripping or falling like ski-ing, roller blading & biking are inappropriate.

A combination of both cardio & resistance training is very important, & here are some exercises that are particularly relevant to pregnant exercisers.

1- Kegel exercises- to keep the pelvic floor firm & maintain control

2- Anterior tilt exercises- to counter a common postural deviation of pregnancy, lordosis, or the swayback, which the pregnant woman tends to unconsciously adopt in order to compensate for her changing centre of gravity due to additional weight around the mid-section. If not corrected, this leads to a lower back ache.

3- Upper back stretches. One of the effects of lordosis (swayback) is that it throws the shoulders backward excessively, causing the upper back to ache & even cramp from time to time. Upper back stretches will ease the area out & get rid of any pain & discomfort.

4- Lower back stretches & strengthening exercises. The lower back is a common site of pain & discomfort during pregnancy. Keeping the back relaxed via stretching exercises, & strong via strengthening exercises can alleviate back pain & discomfort.

5- Calf stretches. Due to postural changes during pregnancy, the calf muscles can get very tight, cramp up & ache. Stretching the calf muscles out regularly will negate this problem.

6- Quadricep strengtheners. It's important to keep the muscles in the front of the thighs very strong during pregnancy in order to help the knees (which are a weak joint essentially) cope with the extra weight & added pressure of pregnancy.

7- Hip toners. As many women spread out & sag at the hips during pregnancy, gluteal (butt muscle) exercises will help counter this problem.

8- Abdominal exercises (modified) can & should be done right through.

9- Exercises to help open up the pelvic region in preparation for the birth process are extremely important

NB- There are many specifications to the above. Workout only under adequate supervision, under a qualified prenatal fitness trainer's care. Each individual is different & what is/ isn't appropriate for each person may vary vastly.

Wishing you a happy, healthy pregnancy!