

Perfect workout for pregnant women



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'In the absence of contraindications pregnant women are encouraged to engage in 30 minutes or more of moderate exercise a day on most, if not all, days of the week.'
Obstetrics & Gynecology, 2002

'Whether you're an active or inactive pregnant woman, whether your pregnancy is normal and healthy or you're in a 'high risk' category, there are 3 exercises you need to do,' advises Madeline Carson from *Newborn Fitness*.

1. Kegel's

Invented by Dr. Kegel in the 1950s, this exercise is essential to help prevent episiotomies, urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse whether you have a vaginal delivery or a C-section. The pelvic floor muscle acts as a supportive sling between the coccyx and pubic bone. They hold everything up, but as pregnancy weakens them, Kegel's become necessary.

You may need to practice Kegel's a while before you get the hang of it. Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles and try to pull them up, as if to hold tight before you go to the bathroom to pass water. Let go without bearing down. Practice several times every day whenever you think about it – in the car, at dinner, at the movies - nobody will

know. Practice a combination of slow contractions which you pull up and hold for around 5 seconds and slowly release and fast contractions which you pull in quickly and hold for 1-2 seconds and then slowly release. Ideally perform 10 repetitions 4 – 5 x per day.

2. Pelvic Tilt

Pelvic Tilt is an important exercise that stretches your lower back and strengthens your abs and glutes. This exercise can help relieve pregnancy related discomforts and postural problems in the lower back and hips and it tightens the buttocks.

In the first trimester and postpartum, you can lie on your back, but during the second and third trimester, you can do

it seated, standing, on all fours or lying on your side.

Either way, tighten your buttocks, pull in the abs (navel to spine) and tilt your pelvis forward and upward as you exhale. Release and inhale. Repeat for 2 x 15 repetitions.

3. Abdominal Contractions

Keeping your abs strong and fit during a pregnancy will help stabilise your trunk to minimise and prevent postural and back problems, help during labour contraction, minimise stretch-marks and help you get your stomach flat again faster postpartum.

If you experience the condition of Diastasis Recti, you must modify your abdominal exercise. Use your hands or a towel

across your back to pull the abdominals towards the midline as you contract. Always ask your health provider or trainer about this.

In the first trimester and postpartum, you can lie on your back. In the second and third trimester, you can sit, stand, lie on your side or kneel on all fours.

Either way, gently pull in the abs and contract them by pulling the navel in to the spine. You should feel the abs get harder. Exhale as you contract and inhale when you release. Repeat for 2 x 15 repetitions.

Note: Always consult your doctor or Healthcare Provider prior to commencing any kind of exercise program and if any symptoms present stop immediately and seek advice. **M&D**



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Madeline Carson is a Personal Trainer and Nutritional Advisor specialising in Pre and Post Natal fitness and exercise.

Specialist classes are now being run in your area!

For more information please contact Madeline on 07900 932724 or email madeline@fitnessandbeyond.co.uk

Eating for two?

BY MADELINE CARSON

THINGS TO AVOID:

- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Caffeine
- ✗ Simple, refined carbohydrates (white bread & pasta, pastries)
- ✗ More than 2 cans of tuna per week
- ✗ Mould-ripened soft cheeses
- ✗ Pate
- ✗ Liver and liver products
- ✗ Unwashed foods
- ✗ Heavily salted foods (avoid monosodium glutamate (MSG))
- ✗ Foods with a high fat content (avoid hydrogenated and trans fats)
- ✗ Shark, Swordfish and Marlin
- ✗ Diets! **

THINGS TO ENJOY*:

- ✓ Fresh fruit and vegetables (especially green leafy veg and citrus fruits)
- ✓ Complex, unrefined carbohydrates (cereals, wholegrains)
- ✓ Adequate quality protein products (lean meat, tofu, fish)
- ✓ Calcium rich foods (lower fat milk and other dairy produce)
- ✓ Vitamin C rich foods (grapefruit, papaya, orange, kiwi)
- ✓ Iron rich foods (pumpkin, spinach, chickpeas, lentils)
- ✓ Folic Acid rich food (dark green vegetables, beans, pulses, cereals)
- ✓ Water, water, water! (at least 2L/day)

Always read food labels and check gdas (Guideline Daily Amounts) to see what proportion of your recommended daily allowance of ingredients such as salt, sugar, fat and calories are contained!

Benefits of a well balanced diet:

- can better the chances of a normal birth-weight
- improved fetal brain development
- can decrease pregnancy complications such as anemia, preclampsia, morning sickness, fatigue, and constipation.
- A healthy diet will also moderate any mood swings and ensure the speediest recovery after your pregnancy.

The average woman should consume around 2,000 calories a day and guidelines suggest increasing this by 300 calories a day during pregnancy, 500-800 extra if you exercise.

* Please note that all items mentioned are subject to being appropriate and assuming that there are no allergies or intolerances. If you are in doubt of any kind or before changing eating habits always consult your GP. ** Unless advised and controlled by your GP.

Fishy Food & Brainy Babies

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THE CONNECTION IS CONTACT BABYLAB AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

We are what we eat! And we normally feel quite comfortable with this responsibility. However during pregnancy responsibility doubles: our baby is what we eat. The foetus receives the nutrients for growth and development directly from us. That makes most of us think twice about another glass of wine, read all labels on the food packages and get information from books, friends and all mighty Internet. The rule of thumb is eat enough fruit and vegetables, choose wholegrain foods where possible, get the right balance of different fats and cut back on processed, refined foods. Also there is folic acid supplementation, which is now routinely advised in the early stages of pregnancy to lower risks of neural tube defects.

Increasingly coming under the spotlight are Omega-3 fatty acids, which play a vital role in the development of the brain and also appear to influence infant cognitive development (things such as attention, memory and information processing skills). The most important

Omega-3 nutrient, DHA, is found predominantly in oily fish such as tinned or fresh mackerel, salmon, trout, herring, kippers, pilchards, anchovies, fresh tuna and sardines. While it is great to increase your oily fish intake during pregnancy, fish can also contain pollutants such as mercury therefore excessive consumption should be avoided. Food Standards Agency currently recommends that pregnant women eat no more than two portions of oily fish a week.

Where possible choose smaller varieties of oily fish such as sardines and avoid eating shark, swordfish and marlin as these fish can contain high levels of mercury.



University of Manchester

Babylab is carrying out a non-intervention, questionnaire-based study that examines the effects of maternal nutrition during pregnancy, particularly fatty acids, on infant cognitive development.

If you're currently less than 28 weeks pregnant and would like to take part in the study or would like more information then we'd love to hear from you! Please contact Alison Rees at the Babylab.

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w: www.psych-sci.manchester.ac.uk/babylab/



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