

Safety Tips for Exercising while Pregnant

It is important to check with your doctor before continuing or starting an exercise program during pregnancy. Your doctor will base his or her recommendation on your general health and current fitness level. And you'll learn about the following safety guidelines:

- **Stay cool.** Overheating during the first trimester can impair development of the baby's central nervous system. Don't exercise in hot, humid weather or when you have a fever, and skip saunas and hot tubs, too.
- **Keep a moderate pace.** Prolonged exercise can divert oxygen in the blood away from the baby. Use the "talk test" to monitor your exertion level: Work out at a pace that allows you to converse without feeling too out of breath.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Have water before, during, and after exercise. An easy way to monitor your fluid intake is to check the color of your urine: if it's clear, you're fluid level is fine.
- **Go easy.** Because your ligaments are more lax during pregnancy, sports injuries are a real concern. Avoid jumping and jarring motions, along with activities that require rapid changes in direction. Make sure your footwear fits properly and provides good traction. Use slow, gentle movements when you stretch. Also, your center of balance will change. Avoid activities that put you at risk for falls, such as biking and downhill skiing.
- **Modify exercises** you do lying on your back. After the fourth month, uterine weight can impede blood flow when a woman is on her back, causing dizziness and other serious problems.