

**Exercise during Pregnancy**

**About Exercising**

* Exercising can make for an easier labor and birth
* It can help in a faster recovery from childbirth
* It helps ease stress and releases endorphins. Exercising can help you feel good.
* Exercising helps make for a healthier and more efficient heart. Remember your heart is working harder now and exercise can help it.

**Recommended**

* Warm up and cool down
* Keep cool
* Stay hydrated by drinking lots of water
* Know you limits and unlike pre-pregnant days, don’t push yourself too hard
* Dress appropriately for the exercise
* Start with your current fitness level, don’t overdo it.
* Consult with your midwife before implementing new exercises to ensure your safety

**Avoid**

* Becoming over heated
* Make sure you can talk while exercising, if you can’t slow down
* Stop if you feel dizzy, faintness, headaches, hard heart pounding, contractions or pain
* Overstretching your joints. They are more susceptible to injury during pregnancy
* Your balance is off center so be careful with sports or exercises that require balance
* Avoid jarring exercises such as jumping or sudden changes in direction like tennis
* Keep off your back, don’t do sports that put the pressure of your uterus on your back, this can compromise baby

**Simple Exercises**

* Squatting
* Tailor sitting
* Pelvic tilt
* Pelvic rock
* Leapfrog
* Knees to chest
* Swimming
* Walking
* Prenatal Yoga
* Pilates
* Water Aerobics
* Bicycling

**Kegels**

Kegels are an exercise that women should do throughout their lives. They are especially important in pregnancy, postpartum or any time that your pelvic floor muscles are stressed such as during coughing episodes. They increase circulation to the pelvic floor muscles and help to tone the vagina.

Kegels are easy to do and can be done almost anywhere, anytime without anyone even knowing you are doing them. A lot of people do them at red lights, while waiting in line or when commercials come on the radio or television.

To do a Kegel, you tighten your pelvic floor muscles like you do when you stop urinating. Practice this once or twice, but don’t make it a habit as not emptying your bladder can lead to bladder infections. When done correctly, you should feel a slight rise in your pelvic floor and a tightening in your abdomen, NOT your buttocks.

You can do a Kegel a couple of ways, one is to hold and release within a few seconds repeating as many times as you can. Usually about 100 of these a day is done, starting with a few and slowly working up to as many as you can do at a time doing this several times a day.

The second way is to hold the Kegel for 10 seconds retightening your muscles every 3 seconds as they will naturally begin to release. Try to do this as many times a day as possible.