

# What exercise is good for me?

**Walking** is free and it is on your doorstep. If you don't regularly exercise this is where to start. Begin with a five minute stroll and gradually increase. As you become fitter you can increase your intensity and duration. Just remember to keep to a pace in which you can hold a conversation.

**Swimming** is a great way to get your heart rate up without putting extra stress on your joints or ligaments. Try to avoid holding your head out of the water because this can cause neck and back strain.

**Aquanatal** classes are popular during pregnancy because, as in swimming, the water helps to support you and your bump while you exercise. It is a fun and social

**Exercise classes**, especially aerobic are good. Avoid impact on your joints by avoiding quick jumps, twists and turns. Ensure your instructor is aware you're pregnant so they can adapt the session.

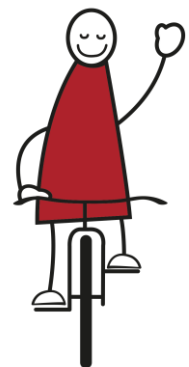
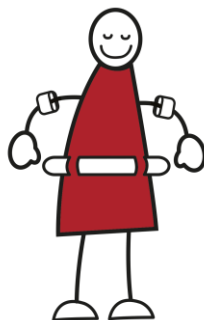
**Yoga & Pilates** is a great way to de-stress and release tension, as well as helping to improve your breathing and circulation. Strengthening your muscles, especially your pelvic floor will help you carry the weight of your growing baby and make you more comfortable in general. Stretching will help target specific aches and pains. Ensure your instructor is aware your pregnant so they can adapt the session

**Jogging** If you're a confident jogger, it's completely fine to continue running. Ensure you always keep hydrated and wear a stretchy support band to support your bump when it becomes heavy. If you get too hot, stop and take a break – this is particularly important in pregnancy. If you are not used to jogging this is not one to start while pregnant.

**Cycling** If you are an experienced cyclist, you should be safe to continue as usual, but if you feel less stable then stay off the bike to be on the safe side. Indoor cycling on a stationary bike or in a group cycling class is safe.

**Resistance training** working with weights is a great way to keep your muscles toned during pregnancy and strengthen your core, and is thought to help during labour. Using weight machines rather than free weights will be safer if you are not used to weight training. Avoid resistance training if you have high blood pressure.

Read more at <http://www.tommys.org/page.aspx?pid=1075>



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# Exercise and pregnancy: when to be careful

For most women exercise in pregnancy is fine. However, if any of the situations below apply to you, talk to your doctor before exercising.

## You should talk to your doctor before exercising if:

- You have any serious medical conditions or health problems, including heart or lung diseases, epilepsy, diabetes that is not well controlled or anaemia
- You have had any vaginal bleeding after 12 weeks
- You have blood pressure problems or signs of pre-eclampsia
- You have been told you are at risk of going into labour early
- The placenta is over your cervix or low down in the womb (called placenta praevia) after 26 weeks
- You have a weak cervix or have had a cervical stitch there are concerns about how your baby is growing
- You smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day
- You have any orthopaedic problems (problems with your bones).

## When you exercise, you should also avoid:

- Getting too hot when you're exercising because this can overheat your developing baby. To prevent this, make sure you drink enough water, avoid exercising in very hot or humid conditions and give the sauna and steam room a miss.
- Low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia) by not eating enough or exercising too vigorously. This is not good for you or your baby, so make sure you eat enough and limit your exercise sessions to 45 minutes maximum.
- Exercising on your back after 16 weeks because it can cause low blood pressure and dizziness. The weight of your baby may press on a major blood vessel and reduce the blood flow to your heart.
- Exercising at high altitudes (over 2,500 metres), unless you are acclimatised, as this reduces the oxygen supply to your baby.

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