

Should you exercise during pregnancy?

It is a well-known fact that exercising is a smart way to stay healthy at every age. But now that you're pregnant, you may be wondering whether it's a good idea to continue or begin an exercise program.

Although previously unadvised, **exercise during pregnancy is considered to be highly beneficial today**¹. A 50 percent drop in the risk of gestational diabetes and a 40 percent drop in the risk of preeclampsia have been observed, accompanied by a more balanced diet and improved psychological condition^{2,3}. Maintaining a reasonable degree of physical activity during your pregnancy is therefore recommended. Excluding special cases that require extra caution and rest such as multiple pregnancies or pathological conditions, **30 minutes of aerobic and muscle-building activity three to four times a week** are recommended¹.

Your body's center of gravity changes as your belly expands during pregnancy. Your ligaments become more flexible to better cope with the physical changes and prepare your pelvis for the birth. Therefore, choose sports that don't require balancing, and avoid excessive stretching. **Jogging, walking, recumbent bicycle and swimming** are the physical activities most suited to your situation. Intense or endurance sports as well as combat sports should be avoided because of the prolonged effort they require and the risk of falling or being injured⁴.

Lastly, be especially careful when resuming your exercise regime after giving birth. You will be able to resume your activity progressively. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact your healthcare professional.

¹ Filhol et al. [*International recommendations on physical exercise for pregnant women*]. *Gynecol Obstet Fertil*. 2014 Dec;42(12):856-60

² Dempsey et al. *No need for a pregnant pause: physical activity may reduce the occurrence of gestational diabetes mellitus and preeclampsia*. *Exerc Sport Sci Rev*, 2005, 33: 141-9

³ Poudevigne & O'Connor. *A review of physical activity patterns in pregnant women and their relationship to psychological health*. *Sports Med*, 2006, 36: 19-38.

⁴ <http://inpes.santepubliquefrance.fr/CFESBases/catalogue/pdf/1060.pdf>