



Exercise and pregnancy

Exercise in pregnancy is an investment in the future of a woman's body. With your doctor's permission, and if you are experiencing a normal uncomplicated pregnancy you can exercise. There are many potential benefits to exercising during pregnancy. Exercise has profound effects on the body.

When choosing an exercise program, the following considerations and guidelines need to be considered:

- Pregnant women should engage in regular exercise at least three times per week. Regular aerobic exercise has been shown to improve cardiovascular functioning in pregnant as well as non-pregnant women.
- Do not exercise in a hot, humid environment or when you have a fever.
- Avoid rapid, bouncing gaiting movements - to help protect your joints and ligaments which soften and become lax during pregnancy.

- A five minute warm-up is essential before beginning an exercise session, as well as a cool-down of similar length.
- Avoid exercises that require you to lie on your back for a prolonged period of time after 4 months of pregnancy as this decreases the blood flow to you and your baby leading to dizziness, nausea and lowered blood pressure.
- Liquids should be taken before, during and after your exercise session. This is to avoid dehydration.
- Eat at least an hour before commencing with exercise. No high sugar snacks.
- Stop your activity immediately if any unusual signs appear. Contact your doctor if you experience palpitations, vomiting, leaking of amniotic fluid, sudden onset of chest pain, sudden or severe headache, onset of clonic contractions, vaginal bleeding, fainting, shortness of breath, back, pelvic or hip pain or difficulty in walking.

Research has shown that during labour, women who have done cardio and weights bearing exercises regularly during pregnancy have a:

- 25% decrease in the need for pain relief.
- 75% decrease in the incidence of maternal exhaustion.
- 50% decrease in the need to artificially rupture the membranes.
- 50% less likely to be induced and need intervention in labour.
- 25% decrease in the need for episiotomy.
- 75% decrease in the need for forceps and cesarean sections.
- Regular exercise has been seen to shorten labour by a third.

Additional benefits are:

- Maternal discomforts such as back pain and pelvic pain are reduced.
- Women who exercise get ill less due to a better immune system.

- There is an increase in maternal fitness and a sense of well-being and a good body image.
- Better than average placental growth improving supply of glucose and oxygen to the baby.
- Improved rate of recovery post birth.
- Weight bearing exercises help with improving bone density.

Discuss your exercise options and plans with a doctor or specialist in the exercise and pregnancy field. You will need to be screened to ensure there is nothing about you or your pregnancy that may contraindicate exercise. Once cleared begin slowly, gradually increasing your intensity until you are comfortable.

Preggi Belles

Preggi Belles is a unique training program developed by Physiotherapists in accordance with both the American and Canadian Gynaecological and Obstetric guidelines for exercising in pregnancy. It has been running in Australia for the last 7 years. To date more than 5000 women have participated in the program.

Preggi Belles SA currently has 6 venues in Johannesburg and three venues in Cape Town, and by mid 2006 will include Durban as well.

Preggi Belles training increases cardio vascular fitness, stabilises, tones and strengthens all muscle groups, and promotes a healthy, strong and fit pregnancy. This unique way of exercising utilizing the med ball provides an intensive abdominal and lumbar muscle work out, while significantly lowering impact on the spine. The med ball also provides a comfortable dynamic base of support, promoting good posture and pelvic positioning.

Preggi Belles pride themselves in being in constant contact with both you and your carer(s); as well as keeping abreast of the latest research and developments.

Contact Preggi Belles for your free introductory class on 011 12 6284823.



South Africa's premier exercise programme for pregnant woman



Why Do Preggi Belles?

- 75% decrease in the incidence of maternal exhaustion.
- 50% decrease in the need to induce or stimulate labour.
- Decreased maternal weight gain.
- Lower, shorter & less complicated labours.
- Improved rate of recovery post birth.
- Improved neonatal development at birth and through the first 3 yrs of life.

www.preggibelles.co.za
011 12 6284823