Monitor Your Effort

Learn More

Physical Activity During Pregnancy

Find more information on the web:

http://mybabymymove.ucdenver.edu/

http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/pregnancy.html

http://www.acog.org/publications/patient_education/bp119.cfm

Physical Activity During Pregnancy

When you are exercising it is important to monitor your intensity level. Intensity can be monitored by 2 methods:

RPE: another way to measure intensity is to use the RPE scale (see above). While doing exercise such as walking or stationary biking, think about where you would rate your effort on the RPE scale. It should be between 12 and 14 on the chart.

The talk test: In general, when you are exercising you should be able to talk without taking many pauses between sentences. You should be able to talk, but not sing, while exercising.

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**Why Should I Exercise?**

Before beginning any exercise program, talk with your healthcare provider about exercise.

When you are pregnant, you may not be feeling your best. Exercise may help provide some relief. For healthy women with a normal pregnancy, exercising regularly - at least 30 minutes on most, if not all, days of the week - can be beneficial for mother and baby.

**Exercising while pregnant may:**
- Decrease excessive weight gain
- Prevent low back pain
- Improve labor and delivery
- Improve your mood

**What Type of Exercise is Safe?**

**What type of activities are safe?**

Walking, swimming, stationary biking, aerobics, running, and strength training are all considered safe for pregnant women. Activities that have a high potential for contact or falling (i.e. ice hockey, downhill skiing, soccer, basketball) should be avoided.

**How often should I exercise?**

It is recommended that you exercise most or all days of the week. When beginning, a good goal is 3 days per week. Increase days per week as you become more accustomed to exercise.

**How long should I exercise?**

It is recommended that you exercise for 30 minutes or more each bout. When starting out, exercise for 15-20 minutes and increase the duration of your exercise as you become stronger.

**How hard should I exercise?**

Moderate-intensity is recommended. See the panel on the left and the RPE chart on the back of this brochure to learn how to monitor your effort.

**Stop exercising if you experience:**

vaginal bleeding, muscle weakness, dizziness or feeling faint, calf pain or swelling, increased shortness of breath, uterine contractions, chest pain, decreased fetal movement, headache, or fluid leaking from the vagina. If you experience any of the listed symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

**How Do I Keep Exercising?**

Continue to make physical activity a priority.

Remember, the goal is to engage in moderate-intensity physical activity most or all days of the week.

Follow the chart below for a recommended progression:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Frequency (per week)</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>12-14 RPE</td>
<td>15-25 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>12-14 RPE</td>
<td>25-35 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>11+</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>12-14 RPE</td>
<td>30+ minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wear loose and comfortable clothing that will help keep you cool while exercising
- Stay hydrated (drink water) before, during, and after exercise
- Invest in good, supportive shoes for exercise
- Watch for uneven surfaces when walking

Contact your healthcare provider if you have questions