

## Correct postures



During your pregnancy it is crucial from the start that you try to develop and/or maintain good posture. Always remember to gently tighten your abdominal and pelvic floor muscles before and during movement for additional support.

Good posture is beneficial for both you and your baby. Here are some of the key benefits:

- Gives baby more room to grow and move
- Reduces lower back, shoulder, neck and pelvis pain
- Enhances recovery post birth
- Reduces diastasis recti-abdominal separation

Once you have good posture, your body functions correctly and you get optimal muscle balance. Good muscle balance and strength increase recovery as poor posture in pregnancy generally worsens post birth, increasing the chances of injury and developing muscle aches and pains.

### What you need to do:

You need to check your posture daily and you need to make the changes to correct your own posture.

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## INSTITUTE OF OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY



## ANTENATAL EXERCISES

FITNESS DURING PREGNANCY

## Caring for your body during pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of tremendous musculoskeletal, physiological and emotional changes. For many women, the primary focus is on maintaining physical wellness.

So, this brochure contains information for expectant mothers on how to look after themselves during pregnancy.

The content supports information provided by the Physiotherapist at Antenatal classes.

If you would like further help, contact your Gynaecologist who may refer you to a Physiotherapist specialising in women's health.

## Benefits

Antenatal exercises help:

- Maintain cardiovascular fitness
- Improve posture
- Decrease physical problems e.g, back pain, heel pain, leg cramps etc.
- Maintain muscle length and flexibility
- In maintenance of healthy weight range
- Improve blood circulation
- Improve breath awareness and control
- Reduce stress, anxiety & fatigue
- Strengthen specific muscles in preparation for labour and delivery
- In post-natal recovery
- Reinforce relaxation and improve physical well-being

## Structure of Antenatal exercise class



- Exercise classes for pregnancy have quite different approaches and thus cater to different woman's needs
- Some classes can be similar to a modified low-impact aerobics class with a component of cardiovascular work
- Other Antenatal exercise classes emphasise on including ergonomic principles of back care in moving and changing positions at work places
- Gentle stretches for muscle groups at risk of shortening
- Practice of relaxation and breath awareness
- Utilisation of movements which increase body awareness and control
- Aspects of physical changes and preparation for labour
- Pelvic floor strengthening to promote normal vaginal delivery

## Guidelines

- Consult your doctor
- Progress/Increase gradually if previously sedentary
- Exercise thrice a week
- Moderate exercise should not exceed 20-30 mins
- Avoid overheating and exercising in hot conditions
- Maintain adequate fluid intake to avoid dehydration
- Do not exercise with a febrile illness
- Ensure adequate warm-up and cool-down periods
- Avoid contact sports after 16 weeks gestation
- Avoid ballistic/bouncing movements
- Avoid breath-holding
- Increase calorie intake as per your exercise needs

## Warning signs (when to stop immediately)

It is important to perform all the exercises after consulting your doctor, under strict guidance and supervision of the physiotherapist.

Watch for following signs & symptoms, if exercising without supervision:

- Increased heart rate (>140bpm)
- Palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Faintness
- Vaginal fluid discharge
- Pain
- Abdominal heaviness

If any of the above occurs, STOP immediately and consult your healthcare provider.