

## Myth 6: I don't need to do Kegels

### KEGELS.... MORE THAN FIXING A LEAK

Improve bowel & bladder control  
Improve support for your pelvic organs  
Help your overall "core" muscle strength

## Myth 7: Sit-ups are a good exercise during pregnancy

### THINK AGAIN!

They can put pressure on the abdominal muscles and are hard on your back  
Try some basic tummy tuck exercises (for your transversus abdominus muscle) and Kegels to help protect and support your back (remember the Physio Talk?)

## Myth 8: I can wear any old bra or shoes

### SUPPORT, SUPPORT, SUPPORT!

Your breasts and feet will thank you for wearing proper supportive bras and runners  
Your back will thank you too!

## Myth 9: The more the better!

### BALANCE IS THE KEY!

Listen to your body  
Find a balance between activity and rest  
Relaxation, gentle stretches and breathing exercises are also a part of fitness

## Myth 10: I can't exercise because..

I am not sporty, have small children, work, hate the gym, it's boring etc.

### EXCUSES, EXCUSES!

It's about being active and finding something YOU like to do.  
Exercise with a friend, push the stroller, use community centre child care, listen to music, walk on your lunch breaks...



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exercise

healthy for  
**YOU**  
healthy for  
**BABY**

PregnancyVancouver.ca  
fitpregnancy.com  
socg.org  
casm-acms.org  
bcwomens.ca/Services/  
PregnancyBirthNewborns/  
MaternityAndFamilyCare

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resources

## Can I exercise while I am pregnant?

The answer is yes. You can continue or start an exercise program while you are pregnant. This doesn't mean that you need to join a gym or buy lots of expensive equipment. You can walk, swim, cycle, or find something that you like to do that gets your body moving and heart working.

## How can exercise benefit me?

As your body changes during pregnancy, exercise can help you feel better during some of these changes. Here are some of the benefits that regular exercise can bring:

- Improves your posture and helps reduce back pain.
- Decreases leg cramps
- Reduces constipation
- Helps you to feel more energetic
- Improves your overall mood

## What do I need to consider while pregnant?

By following these guidelines, you will not only get the benefits of exercise, but you will feel comfortable doing it.

- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise.
- Wear layers of clothes and take off the layers as you get warmer (avoid overheating).
- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Wear a good support bra.
- Try to do some type of exercise at least 3 – 5 times/week.
- Do kegel exercises every day.

## Is exercise safe for my baby?

Research tells us that moderate exercise is safe in a normal healthy pregnancy, even if you did not exercise before you were pregnant. You need to check with your doctor or midwife before you begin any exercise program. Talking with your doctor or midwife gives them more information about how you are taking care of yourself and your baby and will help you to feel more confident about exercising.

## What kind of exercise should I do?

In order to get the best benefits for you and your baby, exercise that gets your heart beating faster (cardiovascular exercise) is the best. This can include walking, swimming, cycling, fitness classes (look for a prenatal exercise program in your community), or anything that gets your heart rate up.

## How hard should I be exercising?

You don't have to go really fast to get the health benefits. A good way to monitor how hard you are exercising is to use the "talk test." Say two sentences out loud while exercising. If you can do this without being short of breath, then you are in the right range.

## How long should I be exercising?

Start out with 15 minutes per day. This can be increased to 60 minutes per day when you feel comfortable. As a general rule try to exercise most days of the week...five times per week if you can, to get the maximum benefits for you and your baby.

## What are kegel exercises?

Kegel exercises are to help strengthen your pelvic floor. This is the part of your body that is directly supporting the extra weight of your baby.

### Kegels are important because they:

- Can help prevent urine leaks when laughing, sneezing or lifting
- Help support your pelvic organs
- Are an important part of your "core" muscle strength

### Here are sample kegel exercises:

- Slow hold: squeeze and lift up the pelvic floor muscles (as if to stop your pee). Continue to pull up strongly and hold for a few seconds, then let go. Repeat this 10 times and hold for 5-10 seconds each time.
- Quick squeeze: pull up and in, quickly and strongly (as above). Don't hold it; just squeeze and let go. Try doing 10 in a row. This exercise helps to stop leakage when you cough, sneeze or lift.

# Exercise Myth Busters

## Ten Tips Pregnancy and Exercise

### Myth 1: You can't exercise during pregnancy

#### YES YOU CAN!

Exercise: healthy for you, healthy for baby, healthy for family  
Start or continue to make exercise a part of your lifestyle  
Safety first! Consult your care provider for guidelines

### Myth 2: No pain, no gain!

#### WRONG! THIS CAN LEAD TO INJURY

Listen to your body  
If you experience pain or discomfort, consult your healthcare provider

### Myth 3: Exercise as usual

#### KEEP ACTIVE BUT STAY SAFE

Avoid scuba diving, contact sports, downhill skiing, horseback riding  
Be careful when trying new things  
It's easier to lose your balance and your joints are looser

### Myth 4: I have no time to exercise!

#### IT ALL ADDS UP!

Break your exercise into several smaller periods instead of one long session  
Exercise benefits add up

### Myth 5: Exercise is expensive

#### IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE

Be creative  
Go for walks outside, use water bottles for weights, towels for stretching  
Choose healthy options during the day  
Take the stairs instead of elevator  
Walk to the store instead of driving

wellness

energy

mood