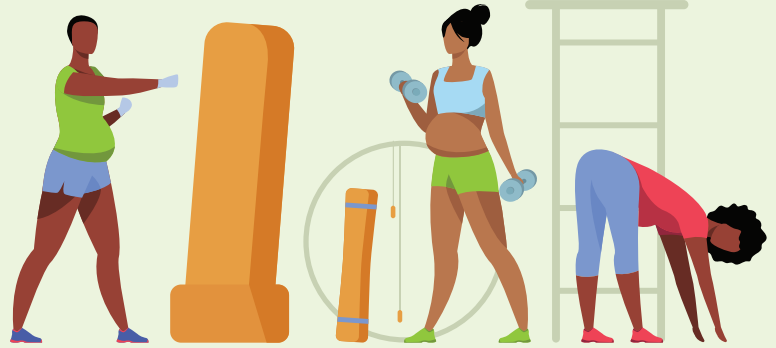


Stay Active During Pregnancy

Physical activity is important for everyone, including people who are pregnant. Staying active during pregnancy can help you feel better right away — and it can even make your labor shorter and recovery faster.



Being active can...



Boost your mood



Sharpen your focus



Reduce your stress



Improve your sleep

Getting active during pregnancy may also make it less likely you'll have complications like:

- **Gestational diabetes** (a type of diabetes that happens during pregnancy)
- **Preeclampsia** (a condition that causes high blood pressure and other problems)
- **Postpartum depression**

If you were already physically active before your pregnancy, it's healthy to keep it up. Even if you were doing more vigorous activities — like running — it's safe to keep doing them while you're pregnant.

And if you weren't active before your pregnancy, it's not too late to start!

Listen to your body.

Remember that lots of things count as physical activity — so listen to your body, and find what works for you at each stage of your pregnancy. And keep in mind that physical activity may feel different when you're pregnant. If an activity doesn't feel right, try something else instead.

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity



- If you weren't physically active before, start slowly — even 5 minutes of physical activity has real health benefits, and you can build up to more over time
- Choose activities that make your heart beat faster — like walking fast, dancing, swimming, or raking leaves

Muscle-strengthening activities



- If you're used to lifting weights or doing other muscle-strengthening activities, it's safe and healthy to continue while you're pregnant
- Remember that lifting weights isn't the only way to strengthen your muscles — for example, you can use resistance bands or do body-weight activities, like squats and lunges
- Make sure you're not holding your breath while you do muscle-strengthening activities

Avoid high-risk activities.

- Avoid doing any activities while lying flat on your back after the first trimester (12 weeks) because it can cause problems with blood flow — try propping yourself up with a pillow instead
- Stay away from activities that increase your risk of falling, like downhill skiing or horseback riding
- Avoid playing sports where you could get hit in the belly, like basketball or soccer

Talk with your doctor.

Prenatal checkups are a great time to talk about physical activity. Ask your doctor questions like:

- How can being active help me have a healthier pregnancy?
- What activities would you recommend for me?
- Are there any activities I need to avoid?



Find tips to get moving at

<https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/pregnancy/nutrition-and-physical-activity>