

MUM[•]HOOD

BY



Exercise Pregnancy Guidelines

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MUMHOOD

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Welcome to MumHood!

As you embark on this exciting stage of your life, it can be really confusing as to what you can and can't do when it comes to exercise.

At Frame, we're here to help you understand the demands on your ever-changing body throughout each trimester and to help you make the right exercise choices.

Benefits

Gone are the days when we were told not to exercise when pregnant. There is now plenty of research to prove that staying active during pregnancy has many benefits to both your mental health and physical wellbeing.

Here are just a couple of benefits:

- Helps strengthen your body and overall endurance in preparation for labour
- Helps you maintain a base level of fitness
- Helps reduce backache, constipation, bloating and swelling
- May help lessen the symptoms of gestational diabetes
- Increases your energy levels
- Improves circulation
- Helps to relieve stress and muscle tension
- Improves your mood
- Improves your posture
- Promotes better sleep
- Aids your body's recovery after birth, including the strength and tone of your pelvic floor and core muscles
- Can help prevent common 'mum aches' (shoulders, hips and back)
- Strengthening the back and postural muscles can go a long way to preparing your body for coping with the stresses of being a new mum
- Helps you get back into training more easily after the birth

Is exercise safe when pregnant?

- Yes! In most cases, exercise is perfectly safe and offers many health benefits
- You will inevitably gain weight, growing a baby will do that and it's a beautiful thing! Now is not the time to exercise for weight loss, and neither is it the time to start a new exercise regime. This doesn't necessarily mean don't exercise. If your body hasn't been pre conditioned to a particular form of exercise, it would be more beneficial to stick to pregnancy specific classes or work with a pre and postnatal trainer
- If you have been exercising regularly prior to pregnancy, you are totally fine to continue with the same types of exercise, so long as you bear in mind these exercise guidelines and understand the pregnancy modifications, if you are continuing with 'open' classes

Low risk?

Exercise does not put you at risk of miscarriage in a normal pregnancy. You should always consult with your healthcare provider (GP / Midwife) before starting any exercise routine. However, please bear in mind that often these healthcare providers aren't always fully trained in prenatal exercise, so if you are categorised as a 'low risk' pregnancy, then these guidelines will likely give you more in-depth information than you will get from your healthcare provider.

However, for anything other than a low risk pregnancy, you should always listen to your healthcare provider or seek more specific personal advice from a specialist.

A bit of science... Your baby is surrounded by fluid in the amniotic sac, which is nestled inside the uterus, which is surrounded by the organs, muscles and your physical body. This creates a rather safe environment for your developing baby.

However even with this protection, it is recommended that you avoid high impact exercise and not to over-push yourself, before you become bigger and you have your bump as a constant reminder!

Training in your 1st Trimester

Many people are told to hold off exercise in the first trimester. This is your first stage of change and you and your body may feel extremely tired. You may not even feel like exercising, which is perfectly normal and ok. Listen to your body and how you feel.

It is important to give yourself a break and rest when you feel you most need it. For those who want to keep exercising; exercising in your 1st and 2nd trimester has been correlated with feeling better in the 3rd trimester; a decrease in perceived exertion during labour and is also associated with fewer symptoms and discomforts of pregnancy.

That said, it is advised to lower the intensity, the length of aerobic exercise during your first trimester, especially between 8-14 weeks, for all the reasons mentioned above.

Pregnancy Guidelines

- The bigger, more important things to be aware of are the things that may not appear too obvious and are essential to keep in mind if you are going to keep exercising regularly
- Always let your instructor know that you are pregnant at the start of a class so they can help you with modifications
- Avoid contact sports, rapid changes in direction, and activities where falling is more likely (eg. kickboxing, high impact dance classes, netball, horse riding, skiing, hockey...) Exercises that involve jerking actions and sudden movement can place stress on joints, leading to postural misalignments or joint injuries. The risk of back injuries associated with weight training are also increased, so get some guidance on how best to support your body if you want to continue with weight training
- Avoid bouncing when stretching and OVER-stretching
- It is good to stay mobile as possible, especially into the later stages of pregnancy when your body needs it most. Though be aware to limit the stretching of joints, especially if you are already hypermobile. Pregnancy increases the hormone Relaxin from the very early stages of pregnancy. This means that you will feel like you are more flexible when pregnant, but actually the Relaxin is softening your joints and ligaments in preparation for labour, although this increases your joint vulnerability during exercise, especially of the hips and lower back. You don't want to soften the joints any further by overstretching, as this will likely cause issues with recovery post-birth, when you're trying to knit your body back together. We would suggest you stretch to 80% of your maximum, and think of 'strength' and alignment within your stretches rather than trying to get too deep. Guidelines are 10-15 seconds per stretch
- Keep hydrated. Always have water with you when exercising, and take regular sips
- Do not exercise to the point of exhaustion. Work to your 70% max only
- Reduce the intensity of your exercise. If you're doing a weights-based class or training, then reduce the weight you're lifting. If you are doing a cardio class, then reduce the intensity. So for example, if you usually use a 12kg kettlebell, think about switching to an 8kg. You never want to feel like you're working at maximum effort. A nice way to think about it, is to work to 70% of maximum effort at the most

Pregnancy Guidelines

- Stay away from any exercise that puts direct pressure on the 'rectus abdominis' or your '6-pack muscles'. For example ab crunches, sit ups, ab prep in Pilates, or 'knee to nose' in yoga or heavy weights over your head in a fitness class. Keep full body or loaded twists small or avoid if you are feeling a lot pressure through you mid trunk area. The long 6 pack muscle will start to stretch to create a parting (diastasis recti) of the abdominals walls for your baby to grow, leaving this area vulnerable to tearing, especially in the third trimester
- You are ok to work your transverse abdominals, and oblique muscles, through controlled Pilates-based moves, planks, whole-body exercises and side bends
- Loaded twists should be kept light and to a small controlled range of movement, so not to strain or potentially tear the mid abdominal line (diastasis recti)
- Remember to modify where necessary and to take the easier option when adaptations are given
- Avoid any 'closed twists' where pressure is put on the abdominal cavity, should be avoided, for example 'revolved triangle' and 'revolved side angle' poses in yoga
- Avoid any deep backbends and inversions in yoga classes
- Squats are your friend during pregnancy. This is the easiest way to automatically work your pelvic floor and to work on muscular endurance for your birth, where you are likely to spend a lot of time in the squat position!
- Lying on your back is not a 'no go' but you must take care and listen to your body. New research has shown that lying on your back (for exercises such as hip bridges, and footwork in Reformer Pilates) no longer needs to be completely avoided from the second trimester. However, lying on your back can start to feel uncomfortable as you move through your pregnancy and can start to limit blood flow due to the pressure that the weight of your baby is putting on your main artery, so if you start to feel dizzy or uncomfortable then simply roll to your left side and come out of the position. Ideally we don't want to lie on the back 20 weeks plus in group exercise classes. Recommendations for reformer is lying on the back maximum of 10 minutes

Prenatal Classes at Frame

Prenatal reformer pilates

A Reformer Pilates class specifically designed for the pregnant body is a fantastic way to keep your muscle tone and to help prevent common pregnancy aches and pains, through working on your posture and alignment. It will help to strengthen the deep core muscles to

support you during your pregnancy, assist in labour and help to lay the foundations for recovery once the baby is born. It also works on the stabiliser muscles that weaken due to postural changes (growing bump and boobs!) during pregnancy.

Prenatal fitness

A tailored fitness class giving you a full body conditioning workout, focusing on the muscles that may get weak during pregnancy. Exercises to help prevent common pregnancy aches and

pains, and prepare you for labour and life as a new mum. Functional exercises using dumbbells, bands and cardio section - All exercises are low impact, but you should expect to feel the burn.

Prenatal yoga

A yoga class specifically designed with the pregnant body in mind. Featuring calming sequences, controlled stretching and practising mindfulness to strengthen the connection between you and your baby. It can help to alleviate aches and pains that come as your

body changes to adapt to growing a human! It helps strengthen the parts that get weak and lengthen the parts that get tight during pregnancy. It's helps you to be in tune with the changes in your body so you can adapt.

Prenatal strength

A pregnancy specific strength class. Using sizeable weights and low reps to maintain and build strength during pregnancy. Focussing on the areas that require strengthening and opening during pregnancy and setting you up to feel confident in your body at such an

important time. This class is not about beasting but allows you to continue moving in a way you enjoy in a safe environment. We will focus on unilateral work and movement patterns which mirror everyday 'Mum' movements.

Pregnancy Classes at Frame

- At Frame, we offer 4 specific Prenatal classes; [Prenatal Yoga](#), [Prenatal Reformer](#), [Prenatal Fitness](#) and [Prenatal Strength](#). If you haven't been exercising much prior to pregnancy, we would suggest that you stick to these classes, as they are designed with the pregnant body in mind. These are also your best bet if you are in your third trimester
- We have created a more in-depth EXERCISING SAFELY DURING PREGNANCY video, which can be found [here](#). We really recommend watching this before you start exercising during your pregnancy as you will learn more about what is happening within your body and how to modify your exercise correctly for your body
- If you have been exercising regularly prior to becoming pregnant and have watched the EXERCISING SAFELY DURING PREGNANCY video, then you should be fine to continue with your favourite classes, but be aware that you are likely to need to modify during the class
- Please always tell your instructor at the beginning of the class so that they can help you modify
- Frame Barre and Frame Lift, both come with set pregnancy modifications, so your instructor will always be able to tell you which sections you should take different options for
- Frame Barre is a great option to choose as it is low impact and the majority of the class is safe for pregnancy. You will need to modify the abs tracks at the end, which your instructor will be able to help you with
- Frame Lift is safe if you are used to lifting weights. However, you should drop your weights down a level so that you only work to 70% of your maximum. Be extra careful with lifting weights over head, make sure they are much lighter than usual because of the pressure it puts on the rectus abdominis and potential for causing diastasis recti (separation of the ab muscles). Aim for really good posture to support your back with your changed centre of gravity
- If you have a regular yoga practice, you are ok to go to open classes, but make sure you are aware of your modifications and let the instructor know so they can help you. If you were previously attending regular Pilates classes, you can continue, but be aware there will be sections of the class that will not be suitable and you will need to do other exercises during this time
- Fitness classes such as Kettlebells, Box Fit and Frame Strength are fine to continue, but remember the rules of reducing your intensity and only working to 70% of your maximum. Now is not the time to start going to these classes if you weren't previously

Postnatal at Frame

- We understand it can be quite daunting returning to exercise when you have a new baby to nurture. At Frame we offer 3 postnatal classes, [Postnatal Mat Pilates](#), [Postnatal Fitness](#) and [Postnatal Yoga](#) - all designed for the postnatal body lead by our expert pre/post instructors. To attend these classes you must be a minimum of 6 weeks postpartum and to have had your 6 week check up
- We also recommend you to see a women's health physio or health specialist to check your pelvic floor and diastasis. It's not compulsory but its always great to know more about your body
- If you are new at Frame, the instructor will always ask you several questions. For example, how many weeks postnatal are you, whether this is your 1st, 3rd or 5th child, what kind of birth experience did you have. Of course everyone has a different birthing experience but we want to make sure you get the correct exercises suitable for you
- Modifications and progressions will be given in all classes to ensure that the class is suitable for those just starting back, as well as those who are further along their postnatal recovery journey
- Workout in a baby-friendly and fun environment with other local mums in the super welcoming Frame environment. Babies can chill / play alongside you on a mat, or pray for the perfect scenario when they sleep straight through! We have comfy RockStepper play mat & educational Lovevery toys provided for the babies.
- After-class snacks & teas provided in the reception area for you so you can meet other likeminded mums in the community. We also have baby changing facilities in some of the studios. As in all classes - anything goes - of course you can feed, change nappies or simply allow your babe to sleep. Do what you need to do and join back in when you can during the session. We understand!

Postnatal Classes at Frame

Postnatal mat pilates

Core rehab is the foundations of your postnatal recovery! Working pelvic floor and deep inner core unit - opening where feels tight and strengthening where feels weak. Focusing on functional movement patterns - movements you use in your daily life squats, lunges, push, pull, hinge and walk. Preparing the body to get back to doing what you love! Working through

Pilates movements will encourage length, stability and balance in the body (as well as a little burn - it wouldn't be Pilates without a little fire!) Progressions and equipment will be offered to make sure the class is still challenging to those who are further along their postnatal recovery journey.

Postnatal yoga

Great for waking up the mind body connection and resetting your nervous system. Post natal yoga can reduce stress and anxiety and help improve sleep (when baby allows!) - which is a key factor to feeling good! Taking some much needed time out to focus on yourself will help you to stay calm at a time when a lot of things feel out of your control.

It is also a great way to reintroduce movement into your body post birth. Hours of feeding,

rocking and those awkward hours in uncomfortable positions trying not to wake your sleeping - baby, can lead to all sorts of aches and pains. You will stretch those areas that tend to get tight, and strengthen those required for all the physical challenges of being a new mum. Modifications will be provided throughout, so the class will be suitable for new mums with or without previous yoga experience.

Postnatal fitness

A specifically designed postnatal fitness class. Build up a sweat through low impact cardio, and toning exercises whilst focusing on rebuilding your core, regaining strength and opening up the chest. Modifications and progressions will be given. Getting back into

a safe exercise routine after having a baby is a great way to release happy hormones like endorphins, serotonin and dopamine which can help you feel good which can be especially helpful when you're not getting as much sleep as you'd like!

Postnatal Classes at Frame

Postnatal exercise benefits

- Quicker postnatal recovery
- May reduce the risk of postnatal depression
- Relieves stress
- Improves sleep, mood and energy levels
- Helps to strengthen abdominal muscles and slow bone loss during lactation
- Provides functional fitness for the role of motherhood
- Increases body awareness
- Improve your cardiovascular fitness and restore muscle strength

Postnatal pelvic floor recommendations

Leto <https://letowoman.com>