

## Fitness through the trimesters: Safe and sustainable exercise routine for expecting mothers



Pregnancy can be an exciting and life-changing experience for women, but it can also be challenging, both physically and mentally. Exercise during pregnancy is often recommended by healthcare providers, as it can help improve physical health, manage weight gain, and reduce stress and anxiety. However, when it comes to exercise during pregnancy, it is essential to be aware of the potential risks and limitations that can arise with each trimester.

In this article, we will explore safe and sustainable exercise routines for expecting mothers through each trimester, providing actionable tips and resources.



### First Trimester: Building a strong foundation

The first trimester is a critical time for the development of the foetus and the mother's body. It is essential to focus on building a strong foundation for the rest of the pregnancy. In the first trimester, most women can continue with their pre-pregnancy exercise routines. Still, it is crucial to avoid activities that can cause excessive strain on the body, such as contact sports. **Walking, yoga, and swimming are great low-impact exercises that can help maintain fitness levels without putting too much strain on the body.**

It is also essential to pay attention to the body's signals and avoid pushing yourself too hard. Fatigue and morning sickness are common during the first trimester, and it is vital to listen to your body and take breaks as needed. **Staying hydrated and eating a balanced diet are also critical during this time to support the body's needs.**

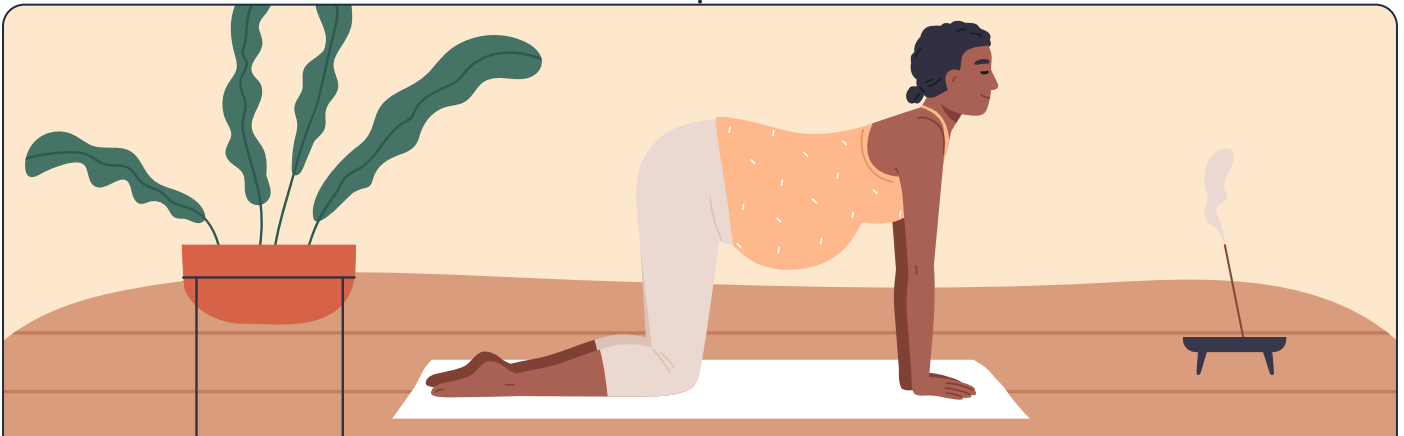




## Second Trimester: Maintaining fitness and preparing for labour

During the second trimester, the body goes through significant changes, and it is essential to adjust your exercise routine accordingly. As the uterus grows, high-impact exercises can become uncomfortable and may put too much strain on the body. **Instead, focus on maintaining fitness levels with low-impact exercises such as swimming, prenatal yoga, and brisk walking.**

Preparing for labour is also essential during the second trimester. Pelvic floor exercises can help strengthen the muscles that support the bladder, uterus, and bowel, reducing the risk of incontinence and assisting with labour and delivery. **Prenatal Pilates and other exercises that focus on strengthening the core and lower body can also be helpful in preparing for labour and delivery.**



## Third Trimester: Staying active and preparing for postpartum recovery

The third trimester is a time when many women experience discomfort and fatigue due to the size and weight of the foetus. However, staying active during this time can help reduce discomfort, improve circulation, and prepare the body for postpartum recovery. **It is important to continue with low-impact exercises such as walking, swimming, and prenatal yoga, focusing on movements that support the body's needs.**

During the third trimester, it is also essential to prepare for postpartum recovery. Prenatal Pilates and other exercises that focus on the pelvic floor muscles and lower body can help prepare for a faster recovery after delivery. It is also essential to pay attention to the body's signals and avoid pushing yourself too hard. **Resting when needed and staying hydrated are critical during this time to support the body's needs.**





## Resources for expecting mothers

The importance of exercise during pregnancy cannot be overstated, but it is essential to ensure a safe and sustainable exercise routine. **The following resources can provide additional support and guidance for expecting mothers:**



1

### **NHS Pregnancy and Exercise:**

The National Health Service offers guidance on exercise during pregnancy, including safe and effective exercises for each trimester.

2

### **The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG):**

The RCOG has published guidelines on exercise during pregnancy, including recommendations on the types of exercise that are safe and effective for pregnant women. The guidelines also provide information on when to start and stop exercise during pregnancy, as well as advice on how to modify exercise routines as pregnancy progresses.

3

### **The National Childbirth Trust (NCT):**

The NCT is a UK-based charity that provides support and information to new and expectant parents. The NCT website includes a section on exercise during pregnancy, which provides advice on the types of exercise that are safe and effective for pregnant women, as well as tips on how to stay comfortable while exercising.

4

### **Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy (POGP):**

The POGP is a UK-based organisation that provides information and support on pelvic health issues. The POGP website includes a section on pelvic floor exercises during pregnancy, which provides advice on how to perform these exercises correctly and safely.



By taking care of your physical health during pregnancy, you are also taking care of your mental health. Engaging in regular exercise can reduce stress and anxiety, improve mood, and promote better sleep. Contact your HealthHero or Validium service today for more support and advice.

