

## 8 DOs To Keep You Fit During Your Pregnancy

### 1. Walk plenty.

Walking is a simple but super tool for pretty much anything. From burning calories to keeping joints healthy to mobilizing our almost-always-sedentary hips, walking does more than what it gets credit for. You've already heard pregnant women should walk a lot. That's true and something you should take seriously. Get at least an hour of walking in everyday. How fast or slow you walk will depend on your energy levels and mood on that day. Just go with the flow. But get your 60 minutes of walking in, everyday.

### 2. Eat plenty of good food.

No, you're not eating for 2. But you do need to eat more and better than you usually do. Once again, more AND BETTER. This means you need to cut out some junk and add in some extra whole natural foods to your diet. How do you do this? Quite simple, actually. Take an account of all the junk foods and empty calories you eat everyday. Drop that by however much you're able to. If you can drop all of it, that's just aces! This will mean you're eating lesser than before and you'll be hungrier. So fill up that void with other healthful foods. For starters, get about 3 cups of cooked vegetables and about 1 gram of protein for every kilo of your bodyweight everyday. If you're hungry after that, feel free to add in some starchy goodness in the form of homemade traditional comfort foods like daal chawal, thayir saadam, biryani, ghee dosa or whatever else makes you feel warm.

### 3. Squat.

Hip mobility is something you need during delivery. Women, in general, have better hip mobility than men, precisely for childbearing purposes. But the sedentary lifestyle has made hips less open and mobile than they need to be. So work on opening and mobilizing your hips. And one of the simplest ways to do that is by squatting.

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~~Squats are one of the most basic human movements. When executed properly, they are extremely safe too. So keep the load light or don't use a load, but squat and work on keeping your hips mobile throughout pregnancy.~~

### 4. Load up on water.

You know what we spoke about eating more? That applies to hydration too. Dehydration is a serious risk during pregnancy, especially during the final trimester. Insufficient hydration could cause contractions that could trigger preterm labor or cause other issues on the baby or mother. So be sure to drink more water than you usually do, especially if you are exercising or sweating much for any reason. About 2 litres of water everyday is a good place to start at. Add more or pull out a little based how you feel. Also, keep caffeine to a minimum as it serves as diuretic (makes you pee more).

### 5. Be greedy for activity.

If there is a time you should definitely be active it is during pregnancy. Why? Because with passing day you are getting bigger and every day you need to learn to adapt and control your changing body. With about 8 to 15 kilos of weight gain in roughly 6 months, moving infrequently or rarely only results in you not being ready to handle your new bodyweight. And that usually leads to a series of issues from backaches to physical accidents.

Staying active everyday provides your body with the opportunity to very gradually get used to your increasing bodyweight and changing shape. Your body is balanced on your two feet based on where you hold weight and as that changes, your body also needs to change the way it moves. So give your body every chance to get used to these changes - take the stairs, carry grocery bags, walk to as many places as possible, walk the dog and do whatever other low intensity safe activities come your way.

### 6. Sleep, a lot.

We all know sleep is important, but sleep becomes even more important during pregnancy. Sleep is when all the necessary maintenance activities take place in your body. Unsurprisingly, it plays a major role in the mother and child's health.

A [study from 2004](#) states that sleep has a relationship with duration of labor and risk of cesarean. Women who slept under 6 hours a day on average went into about 29 hours of labor while women who slept 7 or more hours a day on average went into about 17 hours of labor. It also noted that women who slept less than 6 hours per night were 4.5 times more likely to have cesarean deliveries and those with severely disrupted sleep were 5.2 times more likely.

Take away - Sleep cannot be ignored or trivialised. Listen to your body and sleep whenever you feel the need or feel very exhausted. It may not always be possible, but make it happen as possible as possible. Ensure you get at least 7 hours of quality sleep everyday.

## **7. Train light but often**

If you have been training regularly before you became pregnant, continue with that training frequency. If you are new to training, start with 20-25 minutes of light training 2-3 days a week and work your way up to 30 to 40 minutes of low-moderate intensity training 4-5 days a week.

But you need to keep the intensity low. And this is irrespective of how hard you were training before. It is recommended that pregnant women keep their heart rate below 140 beats per minute when training. So do things that don't shoot up your HR without control. Instead, do things that enable you to stay in control and help you build up to a certain intensity. If heart rate is something you can't measure, go by feel - You should not be gasping for breath at any point and should be able to speak full sentences while training.

As you get to week 25 and more, the frequency can remain but drop the intensity further. This is for safety reasons as much as it is for physiological reasons which vary based on who you are and what your condition is at that point.

## **8. Pick low risk, high benefit exercises**

Pick moves that are easy and safe to perform but have a positive effect on your body. Stay away from moves that could possibly hurt you even if you're sure you'll be safe when doing them. Moves like jumping, sprinting and other explosive moves or moves that cause any jerking are not recommended at any point during pregnancy. Safer moves like squats, cycling, band pulls, walking are recommended as they are both safe and effective.