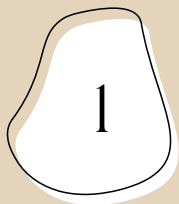


Fertility & Midwifery Care Center



FAQs about Exercise & Pregnancy



Can I exercise during pregnancy?

In most cases, "yes," absolutely! In fact, we encourage it. Physical exercise during pregnancy is associated with 31% reduction in risk of gestational diabetes, among other things. Exceptions to this would include: preeclampsia, incompetent cervix, placenta abruption, preterm labor, or persistent bleeding.



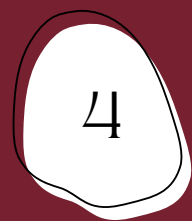
Does exercise during pregnancy increase my risk for miscarriage, low birth weight, or preterm labor?

In a healthy pregnancy, proper and appropriate exercise does not increase these risks.



I wasn't exercising before, but now that I'm pregnant, I'm more motivated to start living healthier. Can I?

Yes! If you are just beginning exercise and pregnant you should start with low intensity (50% of what feels "hard" in 10 minute sessions with 10 minute breaks between sets. Over the next 2-3 weeks you can slowly build up to 30-45 minute sessions of moderate intensity (75% of what feels "hard").



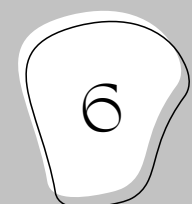
How much exercise is too much?

This is different for everyone. Exercise is "stress," and the body does not differentiate between "good stress" and "bad stress". You need to consider your fatigue level (are you rested), if you are well fueled (eating nutritious foods), and your hydration. A good sign that you are exercising too much is if you are not feeling recovered the next day.



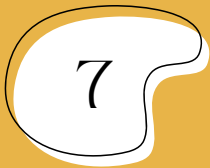
Can I exercise to avoid diastasis?

Exercise will not help you "avoid" diastasis. 100% of women have a diastasis full term. 61% of women with diastasis will heal spontaneously by 6 months postpartum. HOWEVER! Exercise done properly can impact how wide or severe a diastasis gets. Less severe postpartum, less healing to be done. Avoiding exercises and daily movements that increase pressure through the linea alba (the line that runs down the middle of your "six pack" abs) and increasing rib mobility and back expansion are the best ways to decrease the severity of a diastasis. Learn more with Occupational Therapy at FMCC.



I'm so exhausted but want to workout – what's the most impactful but low-key exercise I could try?

BREATHING! The first step and foundation to healthy exercise is mastering a 360 degree breath. That means breathing with side and back expansion instead of belly breathing exclusively. Again... learn more with Occupational Therapy at FMCC.



Can I lift weights during pregnancy?

Yes. The reduction in gestational diabetes risk is greater when exercise includes lifting and cardio. Form is key! Especially as the relaxin hormone starts flowing later in pregnancy.



Are there any workout programs I should avoid (like hot yoga, Crossfit, HIIT)?

This is a hard one to answer without an individual assessment, but here are 4 tips to keep in mind when considering different programs:

- **Temperature is important.** It's not a good idea to exercise in high temperatures during pregnancy. High maternal body temperature increases fetal heart rate.
- **Leaking urine during exercise** is a sign that abdominal pressure is not managed well and modifications are needed.
- **Yoga itself does not need to be avoided** however transitions such as chaturanga can put increased pressure on the abs worsening a diastasis.
- **In late pregnancy avoid single leg exercises** to protect against SI and pubic bone pain.



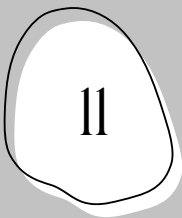
How much should I increase my water intake by when I'm working out?

A good rule of thumb for water, is half your body weight in ounces of water (a 150 pound woman should aim for 75 oz of water per day). This is a minimum and should be adjusted as you exercise. Your urine should be pale yellow in color to indicate adequate hydration.



Will increasing my heart rate during exercise harm my baby?

No. If you don't have any contraindications listed above, you should be safe to exercise. If you have a unique concern, you should ask your practitioner.



When can I return to exercise after I have my baby?

This is very individualized and depends on several factors including pre-pregnancy health, the pregnancy itself, delivery, how well your body is recovering from delivery, how much sleep you are getting, and whether or not you are breastfeeding. We advocate for a return to exercise that starts with breathing and postural alignment to maximize strength potential and decrease risk of injury. Regardless of when you return to exercise, leaking urine is a sign of poor abdominal pressure management and is an indication that corrective exercise would be beneficial.



How long should I expect until I get back to my pre-pregnancy level of exercise?

This is very individualized based on the pregnancy itself, delivery, any recovery considerations, etc. If you have concerns that you are not returning to exercise the way you would expect, Occupational Therapy at FMCC would be happy to do an evaluation and address your concerns.



Can I get my pre-pregnancy body back?

A miracle has occurred. Your body carried, grew, and delivered a human being. Honestly, your body won't ever be the "same", but your body won't be "less than". In almost all cases, it is completely possible to return to the same or increased level of activity and strength that you experienced pre-pregnancy. If there are obstacles in the way of your movement and exercise goals, corrective exercises can make improvements even decades after delivery.

More questions?

Schedule with our Occupational Therapists at FMCC!

📍 Seeing patients at: 9835 Auburn Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825

☎ 260-222-7401

🌐 <https://fertilityandmidwifery.com>



Julia Baker, OTR

"As an occupational therapist, I look specifically at the activities that have meaning and value to you while problem-solving body mechanics and breathing patterns to make these activities easier and reduce pain. I am here to challenge the status quo that urinary incontinence, low back pain, and pelvic pain are the price we pay for motherhood."



Sarah King, OTR

"With each of life's changes, I had to relearn how to move my own body in a way that felt energizing and strengthening. I had to figure out how movement could continue to be incorporated into my current life. I feel blessed with the opportunity to be a part of the FMCC family and look forward to walking alongside women in caring for their unique bodies as well."