

Exercise classes when pregnant:

- Participants need to complete a PARmed-X for Pregnancy with their health care provider
- Instructor has additional training on exercise in pregnancy
- Sessions start with a warm-up and end with a cool-down
- Participants are encouraged to not hold their breath—exhale on exertion and inhale on relaxation
- Participants are encouraged to monitor their heart rate
- Classes include both aerobic and muscle strengthening exercises
- Correct posture is emphasized with all movements and positions
- Abdominal strengthening exercises are not done lying on your back (very important after 16 weeks)
- Exercises avoid bouncing
- Room temperature is kept cooler
- Program is conveniently located near work or home
- Child care is available
- Cost of the program is reasonable or subsidies are available
- Needs of different cultures are accommodated
- Trial period is available



Active Living: Before, during and after pregnancy



More information:

Women's College Hospital,
Exercise & Pregnancy Hotline 1-866-937-7678

Region of Waterloo Public Health,
Reproductive Health Line 519-883-2006

Always talk with your health care provider about your activity level during pregnancy



Be active before you become pregnant to:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Make getting pregnant easier
- Contribute to a healthier pregnancy
- Promote a healthy weight gain during pregnancy
- Reduce stress and tension and increase your energy levels
- Reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and some forms of cancer



Stay active while you are pregnant to:

- Improve how you feel about yourself, your health and your changing body
- Manage some pregnancy discomforts
- Promote healthy weight gain
- Decrease your risk for developing diabetes and high blood pressure during pregnancy
- Make labour and birth easier



Continue to be active after your baby is born to:

- Improve your energy level
- Improve how you feel about yourself
- Promote a return to a healthy weight
- Maintain muscle strength for lifting
- Encourage active living in children
- Reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and some forms of cancer

Staying motivated:

- Choose activities you like to do
- Vary the activities you do
- Be active with family and friends
- Build it into your daily routine
- Use a calendar to record steps, time or distance
- Wear a supportive bra and comfortable footwear
- Drink water before, during and after activity
- Eat a light snack before being active
- Avoid overheating. Dress in layers
- Listen to your body!
- Do the “Talk Test”—if you cannot carry on a conversation, you are working too hard

Starting activity when pregnant:

- Choose non-weight bearing or low-impact activities (e.g., swimming, walking, etc.)
- Start with a 5–10 minute warm-up
- Begin with 10–15 minutes of continuous exercise 3 times per week
- Increase slowly to 30-minute sessions 4 times per week
- End with a 5–10 minute cool-down

Target heart rate zones for pregnancy:¹

Fitness Level	Age 20–29	Age 30–39	40 and over
Fit	145–160	140–156	125–140
Active	135–150	135–145	125–140
Unfit	129–144	128–144	
Overweight/ Obese	102–124	101–120	

*If under 20 years old and active range is 140–155 beats per minute

¹Target Heart Rate reference: Davenport, M., Sopper, M.M., Charlesworth, S., Vanderspank, D., Mottola, M.F. 2008. Development and validation of exercise target heart rate zones for overweight and obese pregnant women. *Appl Physiol Nutr Metabol.* 33(5):984-9