

## Pre Natal Training

Many people shy away from exercise during pregnancy for fear of causing complications. In fact as long as you are cleared to do so by your doctor exercise does not increase the risk of complications (and in fact can reduce complications). There are a number of misconceptions regarding exercise during pregnancy, including...

1. Exercise during pregnancy can increase your risk of miscarriage. **False!** There is no research to support this, there is a slight increase risk of miscarriage if you over heat in your first trimester but this is true whether you exercise or not.
2. Exercise during pregnancy will make your infant smaller at birth. **False!** Moderate and safe exercise during pregnancy doesn't have this effect.
3. Exercise during pregnancy causes you to go into premature labour. **False!** This has not been reproduced in large studies. Pregnant women do give birth 9 days earlier than their due date if they exercise through pregnancy however this is not considered premature.
4. It is not safe to start an exercise programme when you are pregnant. **False!** Research has demonstrated that it is quite safe to begin a low intensity exercise programme in the first to mid second trimester.

In fact there are many benefits to exercising while pregnant, both to the mother and baby!

## Benefits to Mother

- 1- Women who exercise at mild to moderate intensities 3 times per week will experience improvement in their well-being, reduced constipation, fewer leg cramps and quicker return to pre baby weight when compared to their non exercising counter parts (ACOG 2002; Clapp, 2002).
- 2- Reduced risk of developing gestational diabetes, especially women with a BMI greater than 33.
- 3- Risk of developing pregnancy induced hypertension is reduced.
- 4- Fewer obstetric interventions are required i.e. vacuum extraction, forceps etc.
- 5- Reduction in the 'active stage' of labour, the time taken to dilate from 4cm to 10cm.
- 6- Research has suggested that the incidence of caesarean section may be lower in women who exercise regularly.
- 7- Maternal well-being is increased, with exercising mothers having more energy and sleeping more soundly.
- 8- Increased sense of control over your pregnancy and changing body.

- 9- Improved self image.
- 10- Quicker return to pre pregnancy weight.
- 11- Decreased incidence of loss of bladder control during pregnancy, and postpartum.
- 12- Reduction in bone density loss whilst breast feeding.
- 13- Reduction in common pregnancy complaints such as, haemorrhoids, constipation, leg cramps, back pain etc.

### **Benefits to Baby**

- 1- Infants have less body fat at birth. Some early research suggests that the benefits of lower body fat may translate to a reduction heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.
- 2- Infants are less cranky and less likely to have colic.
- 3- Children have greater neurodevelopment scores in oral language and motor areas when tested at ages 5 when mothers exercised during pregnancy.

### **Are there any precautions or special considerations when training during pregnancy!**

While there are many benefits and few risks of exercising while pregnant, there are some precautions you should take. Firstly we advise all pregnant ladies to get cleared by their GP before commencing their exercise program. Secondly there are a number of restrictions or alterations to how you should exercise when pregnant. Without going into every single one here there are certain exercise positions that should be avoided as they can reduce circulation, in addition, certain exercises may be contra-indicated as the body may not have the stability required to perform them safely. The goal of the exercise program should not be to reach absolute fatigue as temperature and heart rate should be carefully monitored. If you are concerned about the potential contra-indications to exercise during pregnancy then e-mail me [kat@cre8studio.co.uk](mailto:kat@cre8studio.co.uk). However with the correct precautions, following a thorough assessment of your strengths, weaknesses and abilities an exercise program should be beneficial and enjoyable.

### **Philosophy of Training During Pregnancy**

#### **1- Prevention**

Regular exercise through pregnancy helps to prevent common complaints such as back pain, diastasis recti (parting of the abdominal wall) and a weak pelvic floor. Gestational diabetes and pregnancy induced hypertension are also reduced when exercising regularly.

#### **1- Preparation**

Exercise will prepare your body for the rigors of labour and strengthening the muscles required will give you an advantage. Once the baby has arrived the strength and stability you have gained while exercising will help you care for the baby more effectively.



## 2- Restoration

By training during pregnancy you will be able to restore your body to its previous level of shape, strength and fitness easier and faster!

## Tips to Successfully Exercise During Pregnancy

- 1- Discuss with your doctor ASAP the potential benefits of exercising during pregnancy and ensure you have no complications limiting your ability to exercise.
- 2- Consult and get assessed by a fitness professional that understands the unique requirements of training during pregnancy. They should be ask you about your previous exercise activities and assess your posture, joint flexibility and stability amongst other things.
- 3- Understand the special considerations that should be made during each trimester. A pre-natal specialist fitness professional should be able to inform you of these and design a program appropriately.
- 4- Get advice on any changes to your nutrition when exercising during pregnancy. A pre-natal specialist should be able to advise you on nutrition or refer you to a dietician.

## Pre-Natal Training Options at Cre8 Health and Fitness

If you would like to ensure that you are exercising safely and effectively during pregnancy, call Kat on 07811070797 or e-mail [kat@cre8studio.co.uk](mailto:kat@cre8studio.co.uk) to discuss the following options.

1. Free Pre-Natal Exercise Consultation
2. One to One Pre (or Post) Natal training
3. Pre-Natal exercise classes

The Pre-Natal classes begin Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April and Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 12.30pm.

Please note anyone wishing to attend the Pre-Natal classes should ring in advance to book a place and discuss the best way forward for mother and child.