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# Low Back Pain during Pregnancy



## Low back pain during pregnancy



Many women suffer from back pain during pregnancy and it is caused by various factors that affect the body during pregnancy. It is recommended to consult a physiotherapist to follow a plan to help improve lower back pain.



## What is the causes of back pain during pregnancy?



Back pain results from the general changes that occur to the body to suit the growth of the embryo:

- Muscles and connective tissues stretch as the embryo grows.
- Overweight.
- Changing hormones leading to pelvic and back weakness.
- Improper posture.



# How can I reduce the back pain?

Back pain can be prevented or reduced by:



Do not stand for long periods, and if necessary, place your hands under the abdomen for support.



Wear comfortable, supportive, low-heeled shoes.



Do not lift heavy objects.



Sit back straight with a small pillow placed at the back cavity.



# How can I reduce the back pain?



When lifting things from the ground, keep your back straight with the knees bent.



Maintain activity with light exercise and stretching.



Strengthen the pelvic floor muscles (consult a physiotherapist).



Being aware of body position at all times.



## The correct posture

Correct posture during pregnancy can help improve back pain.

- Maintaining a **straight back** while standing and sitting as shown in the pictures.



## What is the recommended way to sleep during pregnancy?

It is recommended to sleep on the left side throughout



pregnancy because the vena cava is located in the right side of the spine, which reduces the risk of swelling in the feet, hands and ankles. There is no clear scientific evidence that sleeping on the right side is harmful compared to the left

side. A pregnant woman can sleep on the right side, taking into account changing the position from time to time.



## **Is it recommended to do exercises during pregnancy?**

Yes, it is recommended to do simple exercises during pregnancy. We will illustrate some of them in this booklet. It is recommended to do them 2-3 times a day.

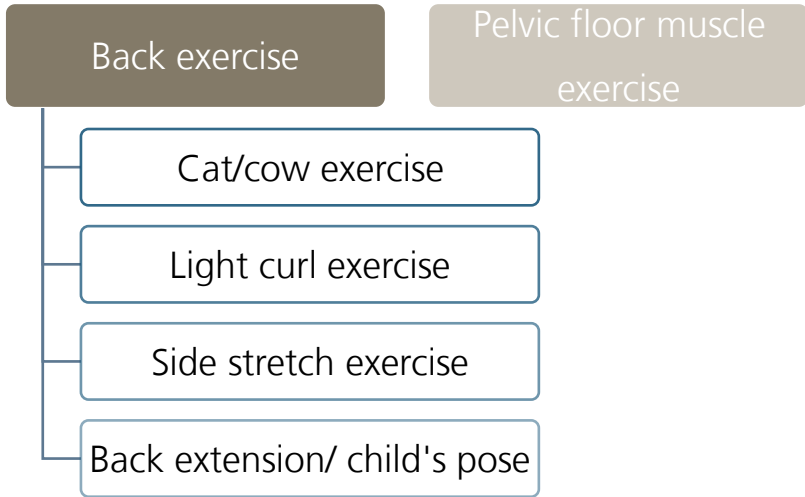
We assure you to consult a physiotherapist to develop a special program corresponding with your health condition. We strongly advise you to inquire from the specialist about the appropriate exercises for you during the last three months to facilitate childbirth.





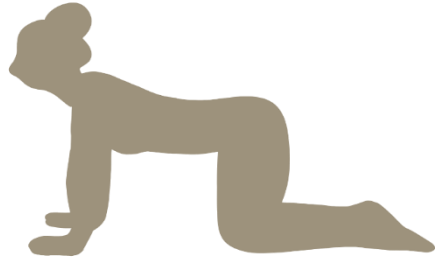
# What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

● Types of exercises:



# What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

## 1. Cat/ cow exercise



The following exercise will help strengthen the abdominal and back muscles, which can support and relieve back pain during pregnancy.

- Get on all your fours sides, make sure that the knees are under the hips and the hands are placed under the shoulders. The spine should be straight and in a "square" position as shown in the above picture.
- Hollow back as shown in the above picture.



# What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

## 1. Cat/ cow exercise



- Then follow this with a rounded spine, as shown in the image above.
- You should feel a stretch in all parts of the spine as you push your back up toward the ceiling.
- Stay in this position for 5-10 seconds
- Keep breathing comfortably.
- Return the back to the first position (hollow back).
- Repeat this exercise 5 times.



# What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

## 2. Light curl exercise



- Start in a sitting position with your back straight.
- Turn gently to the left.
- Stay in this position for 5-10 seconds
- Return the back to the first position.
- Repeat 3-5 times.
- Now repeat this exercise, but turn gently to the right this time.
- Keep breathing comfortably throughout the exercise.



# What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

## 3. Side stretch exercise

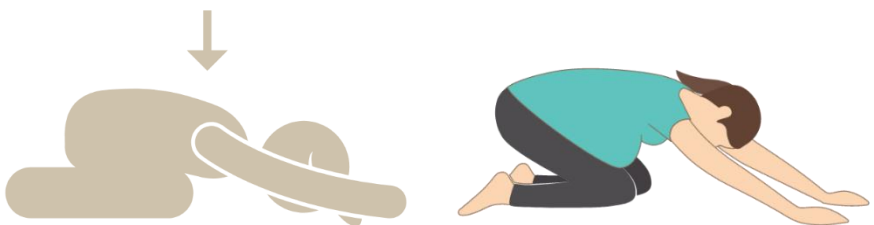
- Sit with a straight back.
- As shown in the above picture, place your right hand on the floor while gently guiding your left arm toward the ceiling.
- Now gently bend towards the right side.
- Take long, deep breaths in this position, allowing you to relax.
- Stay in this position for 5-10 seconds.
- Return to the starting position and repeat 3 times.
- Now do the same exercise but stretch to the right.



# What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

## 4. Back extension/ Child's pose exercise

- Kneel on the floor, make sure your knees are shoulder-width apart and feet close together.
- Now allow your butt to sit back straight on your heels. You can put a pillow at the heels if you feel more comfortable.
- You should feel a comfortable stretch in your lower back.
- Stay in this position for 5-10 seconds.
- Sit straight
- Repeat 3 times.



# What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

## 5. Pelvic floor muscle exercise

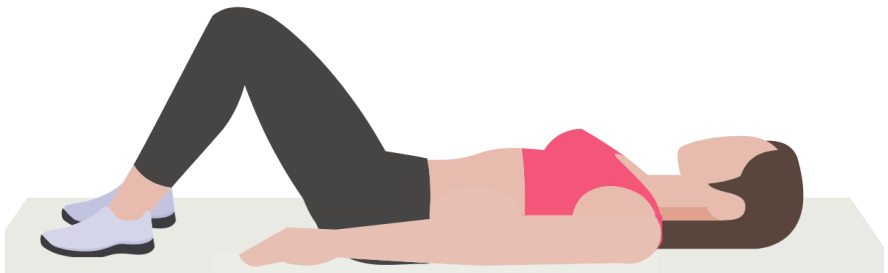
- Imagine that you are trying to stop the exit of gases, to contract the posterior pelvic muscles.
- Imagine that you are trying to stop the flow of urine, to contract the front pelvic muscles.
- Do exercises for the front and back pelvic muscles 10 times, each time you have to contract the internal pelvic muscles while trying to pull inward, not pushing, counting 5 seconds, and then relaxing 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times 3 times a day.



## What types of exercises are recommended during pregnancy?

### 5. Pelvic floor muscle exercise

- Now, try to contract and relax pelvic floor muscles quickly. Repeat 10 times 3 times daily.
- Make these two exercises a daily habit so that you can strengthen your pelvic muscles.





## When do I need to consult a doctor?

Talk to your doctor or midwife if back pain is affecting your quality of life and daily activities. It may require a referral to a physiotherapist.

Contact a doctor urgently if back pain is associated with any of the following symptoms:

- Loss of sensation in one or both legs, the back, or the genitals.
- Inability to control urination or defecation.
- Feeling severe pain at the beginning of the second or third trimester of pregnancy - this may be a sign of premature labour.



- Fever, bleeding from the vagina, or pain when urinating.

## **When do I need to consult a doctor?**

Contact a doctor urgently if back pain is associated with any of the following symptoms:

- Pain in the area under the ribs, on one or both sides
- Feeling the sudden need to urinate with frequent urination.

**You can follow up with a physiotherapist to guide you through a treatment plan that is right for you.**

We wish you a good health and wellness



المصادر والمراجع:

All pictograms used are from Canva.com

المراجعة والتدقيق:

The content of this booklet has been reviewed by physiotherapists  
at King Fahd University Hospital



**Physiotherapy Department**

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**Health Awareness Unit**

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