

Pregnancy fitness requires precautions

BY DAYNA R. BROWN
Copley News Service

If you have been following a regular exercise program prior to your pregnancy, you should be able to maintain that program to some degree throughout your pregnancy, according to the American Pregnancy Association.

Here are tips from the association for pregnant women wanting to exercise:

- If you are just starting an exercise program as a way of improving your health during your pregnancy, you should start very slowly and be careful not to overexert yourself.
- Listen to your body. Your

body will naturally give you signals that it is time to reduce your level of exercise.

■ Never exercise to the point of exhaustion or breathlessness. This is a sign that your baby and your body cannot get the oxygen supply it needs.

■ Wear comfortable exercise footwear that gives strong ankle and arch support.

■ Take frequent breaks and drink plenty of fluids during exercise.

■ Avoid exercising in extremely hot weather.

■ Avoid rocky terrain or unstable ground when run-

ning or cycling. Your joints are more lax in pregnancy and ankle sprains and other injuries may occur.

■ Weight training should emphasize improving tone, especially in the upper body and abdominal areas.

Avoid lifting weights above your head and using weights that strain the lower back muscles.

■ During the second and third trimesters, avoid exercise that involves lying flat on your back, as this decreases blood flow to your womb.

■ Include relaxation and stretching before and after your exercise program.

Working the rump

Simple exercises that will tone the backside:

Weight training

Squats, lunges, hip extensions, outer thigh leg lifts and deadlifts all work the rear. Hips, legs and lower back get benefits as well.

Hiking

Hiking burns flab, especially if you're in the mountains, getting into thin air and if you're wearing a backpack.

Kickboxing

Controlled kicks work your hips, thighs and butt while complex combinations (including punches) will target your abs to make them stronger.

SOURCE: www.about.com

Biking

It's great for your heart and it targets almost every muscle in your lower body.

Running

Running is easy to learn, reduces stress, helps in weight loss and it makes you feel good. A hill or two on your route really helps the burn.

Walking

You can do it anywhere, anytime with no special equipment. If you walk up hills, you can really target your glutes and, if you pick up the intensity, you'll burn some of that extra flab.



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