

Exercise classes when pregnant should:

- ensure the instructor has additional training on exercise in pregnancy
- have sessions start with a warm-up and a cool-down
- not encourage participants to hold their breath—exhale on exertion and inhale on relaxation
- encourage participants to monitor their heart rate
- include both aerobic and muscle strengthening exercises
- emphasize correct posture with all movements and positions
- ensure abdominal strengthening exercises are not done lying on your back (very important after 16 weeks)
- avoid bouncing
- keep room temperature cooler



You may also consider:

- a program that is conveniently located near work or home
- if child care is available
- if the cost of the program is reasonable or are subsidies available
- if needs of different cultures are accommodated
- if a trial period is available

Participants should complete a **PARmed-X for Pregnancy** (see: www.csep.ca/en/publications) assessment with their health care provider

For more information:

Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services
519-575-4400 (TTY 519-575-4608)
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/physicalactivity

Active Living: Before, during and after pregnancy



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, phone app or pedometer to record steps, time or distance
- drink water before, during and after activity
- eat a light snack before being active
- wear a supportive bra and comfortable footwear
- 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

After sitting or standing for 60 minutes, move or stretch for at least one to three minutes

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

¹ Target 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