


The Quick and Easy Pregnancy Workout

Need a workout that will ease some of the aches and pains of pregnancy without giving you new aches and pains? Try the following exercises on a daily basis and add some light stretching for flexibility. Remember to stretch the large muscle groups, such as your quads, hamstrings, chest, and back every day -- this will help to prevent pregnancy-induced injuries and relieve discomfort.

Monday	20 to 30 minutes of cardio activity, such as walking, light jogging (if performed prior to pregnancy), or swimming
Tuesday	Core and pelvic floor work*
Wednesday	20 to 30 minutes of cardio activity
Thursday	Upper and lower body strength training*
Friday	20 to 30 minutes of cardio activity
Saturday	Core, pelvic floor work, upper and lower strength training



*See exercises below

Core and Pelvic Floor Exercises

Core (Abdominal) Exercises

CLAMS

Start by lying on your side with your hips stacked and both legs bent, knees pointing forward. Place your left arm on the floor with your left ear resting on your biceps. With your toes together, lift your right knee without changing your hip position, and exhale, drawing your abs toward your spine. Do 10 to 15 reps; then switch sides.

DIPPING THE TOES

If you're in your first trimester, start by lying on your back. Otherwise, sit in a chair or lie on the floor with two pillows elevating your upper body. Bend your legs into a tabletop position with your shins parallel with the ceiling (if you're in a chair, keep them parallel with the wall, feet lifted) and your arms at your sides. Exhale, drawing in your abs, and gently dip the right foot toward the floor; then repeat with the left leg. Do 10 reps per leg.

Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises (named after the gynecologist who created them) strengthen the muscles in the base of the pelvis. You can do Kegels sitting, standing, or lying down -- and no one knows you're doing them so you can do them in your car, at a meeting, or over coffee with a friend!

So here's how to do it: Imagine you're contracting the muscles to stop yourself from peeing. Just pull these muscles up, taking care not to use other muscles, like your butt, belly, or inner thighs, to compensate (these areas should remain relaxed and your pelvis should stay still). Then, slowly relax your pelvic floor.

QUICK FLICKS

Squeeze the pelvic floor quickly and as hard as you can for one second, rest for one second. Repeat 10 times twice a day.

LONG HOLDS

Squeeze the pelvic floor as hard as you can and hold for five seconds. Start with two sets of five, two to three times per day. Progress slowly to 10 reps of 10-second holds, two to three times per day. Ultimately, work up to 30 to 45 10-second contractions.

Upper and Lower Body Exercises

SQUATS WITH TRICEPS EXTENSION

Start by holding a pair of 5- to 8-pound dumbbells with your arms at your sides and feet shoulder-width apart. Squat, keeping your weight centered over your heels, and do a biceps curl with both arms. Do 10 reps.

LUNGES WITH SHOULDER RISES

Start with the right leg in front and the back foot resting on the ball of your foot, hips facing forward. Keep your arms bent at your sides with your body slightly pitched forward at the hips. Bend both knees into a lunge and extend the elbows at the same time. Do 10 to 15 reps; then switch legs and repeat.

PLIES WITH REVERSE FLY

Start with your legs turned out at the hips with your feet pointing away from each other. Keep your elbows bent with your arms in front of your chest and your palms facing. Slightly pitch your body forward from the hips, keeping your back straight and drawing in your abs. Bend both knees in to a plie and pull back the arms leading with the elbows as you draw your shoulder blades together. Extend the legs and lower your arms back to start position. Do 10 to 15 reps.