

# **The Mommy Fitness Plan**

*Exercise Tips for Pregnant and Post-Pregnant Women*

## **Disclaimer**

This book should not be used as a substitute for medical advice from a professional. Always consult your physician before starting a new diet and/or exercise program.

The author and publisher of this book are not responsible for any injury or mishap encountered by readers due to attempts at the exercises or diet plans within. The author and publisher hold no liability in this regard.

Pregnancy is an exciting time of life, but also a time when you should keep your body in good condition. Why risk it? See your doctor before trying the exercise regimens, dietary plans and fitness tips contained in this electronic book.

This book is meant for informational use only. Advice taken from this book that results in a negative consequence is the responsibility of the reader and in no way is the author and/or publisher responsible.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	4
<b>Part 1: Pregnancy Fitness</b>	<b>5</b>
Chapter One: Pregnant Workout Benefits	7
Chapter Two: How To Exercise Effectively	11
Chapter Three: How To Exercise Safely	15
Chapter Four: Workout Warning Signs	20
Chapter Five: Your Prenatal Exercise Plan	24
Chapter Six: Pregnancy and Weight	40
Chapter Seven: Nutrition For Pregnancy	43
Chapter Eight: Fitness Programs	49
<b>Part II: Fitness After Delivery</b>	<b>53</b>
Chapter Nine: A Note About Caesarean Birth	54
Chapter Ten: Dealing With Diastasis Recti	56
Chapter Eleven: Guidelines For Safe Post-Partum Exercise	60
Chapter Twelve: Getting Back Your Pre-Pregnancy Body	64
Chapter Thirteen: Postpartum Nutrition	71
Chapter Fourteen: Exercising With Baby	79
Chapter Fifteen: Keeping A Healthy Mindset	86
Chapter Sixteen: Your Postpartum Checkup	96

## Introduction

What an amazing time of life. When you're pregnant, everything changes, from how you view yourself and your body, to how the world views you. Your appetite changes, your back may ache and a little life is growing inside of you.

Some women don't know what to make of this whole pregnancy thing, but one thing is for sure—creating life is miraculous.

To go along with this sentiment, this e-book was designed to help pregnant women and postpartum women to stay healthy. From fitness tips to nutrition guidelines, this book will act as your resource guide throughout your pregnancy, delivery and postpartum period.

Some highlights of the book include:

- Exercise Guidelines – From safety tips to getting the most out of your workouts, there are several chapters devoted to this topic.
- Exercise Plans-There are two plans in this book—one for pregnant women and one for postpartum women—that cover the essentials of exercise during this time of life.
- Nutrition Guidelines: Groundbreaking information for a healthy diet that makes both mom and baby happy, from the time in the womb until breastfeeding.
- Mental Health: Special sections on leading a balanced life, reducing stress and postpartum depression are included to give you a better understanding of the emotional and mental changes pregnancy and motherhood entail.
- And much more!

If you're thinking about becoming pregnant, are currently expecting or have recently given birth, this book is the perfect addition to your electronic library. Learn all you need to know and then some about maintaining a healthy body and mind from conception to when your baby is six months old!

# **Part I: Pregnancy Fitness**

Being in good health and physical fitness while pregnant is a great way to ensure an easier labor and birth. But the entire process of getting in shape should start months before you even begin to try and conceive.

“If you were going on a long road trip, it would be judicious to get your car in the best ‘driving shape’ possible,” says Mare Petras, 25-year certified fitness expert and author of *Fitness Simply*. So when it comes to preparing your body for childbirth, you should take a similar approach.

You can never be too cautious, especially when it comes to your body and a life-changing situation like pregnancy. Be sure to do the following before venturing off into the fun world of baby makin’.

- **Schedule a Doctor’s Visit**

A general physical and pelvic exam is in order before you attempt conception. This is the perfect time to ask your doctor about any concerns you may have and to get the assurance of a clean bill of health. This is also important so you can know ahead of time if you are predisposed to pregnancy-related problems where exercise is out of the question.

- **Exercise Regularly**

This book will help, but maintain a regular fitness routine that engages the cardiovascular system, tones your body and makes you all around in great physical shape, says Petras.

- **Eat Right**

Maintain a balanced diet full of green, leafy vegetables, nutritious fruits and whole grains.

- **Be Prepared**

Read books on pregnancy and ask your friends who are mommies about it. While taking any horror stories they share with a grain of salt, it’s good to build up your resources, says Petras, as you set out on this bumpy ride called pregnancy.

- **Ask Yourself**

Are you ready for this life-altering change? Before doing anything, be sure to sit down by yourself and really think about what you want. Ask yourself things like,

“are you prepared mind, body and spirit to energetically take on this huge responsibility?” suggests Petras.

All in all, be sure you're in good shape before you get pregnant. This will make it much easier for you to continue exercising during pregnancy and resume your workouts after delivery. Exercise has also been shown to improve fertility and make pregnancies much healthier.

When you decide the time is right to start trying to get pregnant, make appropriate lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking and drinking alcohol. If you take prescription drugs, talk to your doctor about those that are the best for pregnant women and consider making a change.

Once you are pregnant, however, there are still loads you can do to keep in shape and make the entire process of being pregnant and birthing easier.

So what are you waiting for? Keep clicking that scrollbar and learn what you can do to keep fit and healthy for yourself and your baby.

## Chapter One - Pregnant Workout Benefits

Exercising while pregnant is great for you and baby. However, if you require more convincing, some great reasons to get fit while expecting follow.



### **A Stronger You**

Exercising during pregnancy can greatly increase your strength and stamina. With the rigors of labor just around the corner, you'll want to be in tip-top shape. Women who workout also experience an increase in energy and lessened fatigue. Being pregnant demands a lot of your energy reserves. Building up your aerobic strength helps keep you on the move and ready for anything.

### **Better Mood**

Many people notice that exercise improves their mood. You don't have to be pregnant to enjoy a brightened day after a workout. But pregnant women can especially enjoy a lifting of spirits after a good sweat. Mood swings are kept at bay, you feel better about yourself and your body and that overall feeling of sluggishness takes a backseat. Exercise also acts a way of taking control of your body. "So much of your world and body feels out of control," when pregnant, says

the American Pregnancy Association. But an exercise routine can keep you focused and acts a reminder that you still have control over your body.

### **Less Back Problems**

Exercising helps keep your body in alignment. Your balance and posture are greatly improved, which reduces your risk of falling and of back problems. As your balance shifts, you may overcompensate by placing an extra load on your back. Exercising keeps your body strong and toned, preventing back sprains and strains.

### **Relieves Common Problems**

All of those discomforts pregnancy can cause can be prevented or alleviated by a regular workout plan. Annoyances like constipation, hemorrhoids, leg cramping, back pain, indigestion and swelling of the extremities are lessened and, in some cases, eradicated by exercising on a regular basis. Also, performing pelvic exercises can help reduce the likelihood of incontinence while pregnant and after delivery. Regular exercise has also been shown to reduce stress in pregnant women and can make you feel better overall—emotionally, mentally and physically.

### **Better Sleep**

Whether it's excitement or the need to go to the bathroom that's keeping you awake at night, exercising can help you sleep the whole night through. By ridding yourself of leftover energy, you're more likely to fall asleep and stay asleep. Even better, you'll find yourself more refreshed in the morning from a deeper slumber.

### **Keeps Weight Gain In Check**

If you gain more than the recommended 25-35 pounds while pregnant, it can be extremely difficult to return to your pre-pregnancy weight once your baby arrives. Committing to a workout routine can keep your muscles toned and prevent gaining extra weight than you need.

### **Childbirth Preparation**

Your overall fitness level at the time of labor can greatly impact how smoothly bringing your baby into the world will go. Physically fit women have a higher endurance level and therefore have more energy to get through labor. Exercising regularly has also been shown to lessen the incidence of medical interventions, like the use of forceps, episiotomies and vacuum extraction. Maintaining a regular fitness routine while pregnant has also been shown to make labor shorter and easier as compared to women who do not exercise. Staying in shape helps

you handle the rigors of labor and delivery, ensures you have the energy to stick it out and facilitates much more effective pushing when the time comes.

Tip: If you really want to learn how to push effectively, you will need to practice before you're in the delivery room. Even though it may seem taboo, a good time to practice pushing is during a bowel movement. You can properly engage the muscles you will be using to deliver your baby and once you're actually giving birth, the process will be familiar to you.

### **Bounce Back**

The more fit you are while pregnant, the quicker you will “bounce back into shape,” says Petras. If your body is toned, the muscles will return to their pre-pregnant state much faster than if they're not. This is particularly the case the pelvic floor muscles. If you have strengthened these muscles during pregnancy, they will return to their regular functionality in a much shorter period of time than if you had not. This is called muscle memory and holds true for every part of your body affected by pregnancy. In essence, your entire recovery period will be much shorter than that of a woman who did not exercise regularly.

### **Better Circulation**

Pregnant women are predisposed to developing varicose and spider veins. Keeping fit can reduce this risk by maintaining good circulation throughout pregnancy—a time when your growing belly places a lot of pressure on your veins.

### **Builds Support**

“Participating in a pre-natal exercise class gives you the opportunity to build a support system and future social network,” says Petras. You'll meet other women who are in the same boat as you are and can discuss how you're feeling. These women can sympathize with you probably better than anyone else because they're expecting a child at the same time you are.

### **Creates Time For You**

As you spend nine months thinking about the new little life about to enter the world, exercise is a great way to make and take time for yourself. It's easy to forget that your health has to come first when pregnant. Make use of the time you have to yourself while you still have it, and keep your body in shape. Maintaining a fitness routine while pregnant makes it easy to pick up where you left off after delivery.



Illustration: Matthew Barron

### **Better Labor For Baby**

It has been shown that women who exercise give birth to calmer babies. In fact, labor for these women goes much smoother, typically, and the baby is much less likely to encounter delivery-related stresses.