

Pregnancy Session 2 - Topic 2 Staying active during pregnancy

Resource 3 – Understanding the Wonders of Pregnancy

Pregnancy is an amazing journey filled with many changes in the body. From the early signs of being pregnant to the happy moment of giving birth, a woman's body goes through incredible transformations to care for and help a new life grow. This guide is here to make it easier for soon-to-be parents to understand the complex changes happening in the body during pregnancy.

Changes to your Body during Pregnancy

During your pregnancy, you will undergo important physical changes to nurture your developing baby. These changes begin after conception and affect every part of the body. For most women experiencing a pregnancy without complications, these changes go away after pregnancy. It is important to understand the normal changes occurring in pregnancy as this will help us understand what changes could be unhealthy.

This section will highlight important changes that happen during pregnancy and why these might affect your ability to stay physically active. We will show you how you can safely keep your body moving and why this is so important for you and your baby's health and wellbeing.

What happens to your body?

The main changes that will occur in your body during your pregnancy listed below.



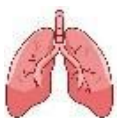
The total amount of blood in your body will increase.
This happens so that your body is able to provide enough blood and nutrients flowing through the placenta and uterus to get to your baby.



Your heart will begin to work harder than it has before.
When more blood is being pumped from your heart within each beat, all that extra blood contributes to optimal growth and development of your baby.
Fun fact: this increase in blood flow will increase flow to the skin, making you feel warmer than usual – particularly in your hands and feet!



You will experience many hormonal increases and changes between trimesters.
Hormones work to control the growth and development of the placenta, developing baby, and help the mother to support the pregnancy and prepare for childbirth.



The volume of your lungs will increase and your breathing pattern may change.

It is normal for your breathing to become deeper or feel restricted during pregnancy. This is because of the hormone, progesterone, and also because the diaphragm may be compressed by the expanding uterus.



Your posture will change due to the changes happening in your muscles and bones. Your body will begin to produce and release hormones, collagens and tissues that will help you in the final stages of your pregnancy and during the birthing process.

Exercising during Pregnancy

How does this impact your ability to exercise?

You might be reading this and think that with all these changes happening to your body, exercise is the last thing on your mind. But it shouldn't be! We want to keep your body moving so that you and your growing baby have the best chance at being healthy during pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum.

So, with all of these changes happening. How do you feel?

You might experience some muscle stiffness and more flexible and unstable joints because your body is releasing hormones so that you can deliver your baby. When this happens, you will need to be careful of overstretching. You may also become less coordinated and experience clumsiness due to your body releasing hormones required during labour (relaxin and elastin).

Remember to refer back to the guidelines in [Resource 6](#) from session 1.