I LIKE TO

STAYING FIT
WHILE YOU ARE
PREGNANT AND
AFTER BABY
COMES ALONG IS
EASY ONCE YOU
KNOW HOW.
KATIE BROWN
TAKES YOU
THROUGH THE
MOTIONS

f you're pregnant for the first time, it can be confusing to know how and when to exercise but if your doctor has given you the go-ahead, then working out is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your unborn baby. Pregnancy is not usually the time to try and build strength and stamina, but just to maintain it. And there are plenty of ways to keep active. Exercises such as yoga, swimming and walking are usually encouraged through pregnancy.

Yoga works on a mental and a physical level - helping mums-to-be prepare for birth and bond with their unborn baby. Some of the poses and breathing practices can also help relieve unpleasant pregnancy ailments like constipation, sciatica and fluid retention. If you can, attend a class for pregnant women

- that way you should be carefully monitored and are likely to meet other mums-to-be. If you do attend a general class, let your instructor know you're pregnant - never assume they can tell! It's important to work within your comfort zone. Some instructors prefer women to avoid classes until they are in their second trimester (week 12-14), as the risk of miscarriage is higher before this stage.

Physiotherapist and mother of two, Alison Blake runs Bodyball exercise classes for pre and postnatal students using a Swiss ball and Clinical Pilates. She stresses the importance of stabilising the spine and pelvis as well as focusing on the deep abdominals, lower back muscles and pelvic floor.

"I encourage women to do resistance work for the upper body

which helps promote strength and prepares the body for labour and the demands of motherhood," she explains.

Whatever activity you choose, don't expect to carry on with your normal fitness routine. Pregnancy symptoms such as nausea, fatigue and fluid retention can all affect how you feel physically. The hormone 'relaxin' is released through the body, which causes your muscles, tendons and ligaments to relax in preparation for the birth, and this can create minor (and in some cases, major) instability within the pelvis and joints.

After week 20, try to avoid lying on your back as the weight of the uterus restricts the blood supply and can make you feel dizzy and nauseous. It's also best to avoid strong abdominal work, intense

5-MIN EXERCISE ROUTINE for mums-to-be (& new mums)



YOGA BREATHING & ARM STRETCHES

Sit cross-legged. As you inhale, raise arms above your head to meet in a prayer position. Exhale and turn palms face down and lower. Repeat 10 times. Sit for a while with eyes closed and hands gently resting on belly. Benefits: Opens the chest, encourages deep breathing, can ease nausea and heartburn and release tension.



CAT POS€

Place hands directly below shoulders and knees below hips. Keep lower legs parallel and hands flat to the floor with fingers wide apart. Exhale and curl the tailbone under and bring your chin to your chest. Inhale and lead with the tailbone as you bring the spine into a neutral position and look about.

Benefits: Cases back and neck ache, aids digestive system and can ease labour pains.



GATE POSE

Place left lower leg on the ground, take right leg out to the side, hips facing forward. Raise left arm over your head and slide right hand down right leg. Ease into the stretch, do not lean forward or back. Alim to bring your right ear towards your right leg. Repeat twice, change sides.

Benefits: Relieves rib pain, helps to increase the suppleness of pelvic area.



HALF DOG POS€

Stand 3 feet from a wall with feet parallel and hip distance apart. Bend forward from hips, keeping legs straight, place hands on the wall at hip height. Roll upper arms and shoulders away from one another, head and neck in line with spine. Hold for 5 breaths.

Benefits: Lengthens

hamstrings, releases pelvic floor and spinal tension, helps improve circulation.



SLEEPING POSE

New and expectant mums up to 20 weeks, lie on back with legs hip distance apart, resting against a wall. Arms out to the side, palms turned up. If you are more than 20 weeks pregnant, lie on your side with head on a blanket and cushion between bent knees. Take deep breaths and relax.

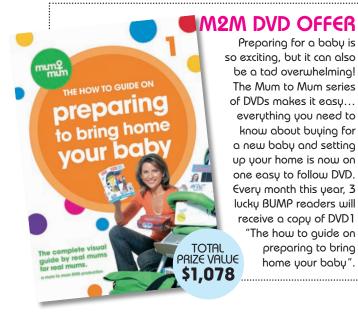
Benefits: Helps to release tension, reduce puffy ankles and ease the nervous system.



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Aussie designer Renae Plant is behind "baby under manufacturing process" - fun and fashionable pregnancy apparel with a twist for mammas-to-be and papas-to-be, plus baby products for the [bump] in question. We're giving away 3 t-shirts every month from 12 hip designs. For more images and details of each month's feature t-shirt, visit www. bumpmag.com.au



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Baobab Clothing is modern, unique and fun. The range includes envelope tees, kimono stud suits, body suits, hoodies and the 'essential' range - generic clothing for babies and toddlers. All are made from super-soft, 100% cotton interlock fabric in a range of colours. To celebrate the launch of their new online shopping store www.baobab.com.au Baobab is offering BUMP readers the chance to win a gorgeous children's wardrobe to the value of \$300.

EGG SEAMLESS UNDERWEAR

Support your new curves with EGG's new Seamless Underwear - it gently moulds to your body shape, keeping a nice smooth line. The set comprises a Seamless Singlet, Underbelly Knicker and Overbelly Knicker. Total value \$72.69/set. BUMP has 5 sets to give away each month for 10 months, starting February, 2007. www.eggmaternity.com.au

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