

Healthy Pregnant or Postpartum Women: Is it okay to be physically active while I'm pregnant and after I have my baby?

Yes! If you are a healthy pregnant or postpartum woman, physical activity is good for your overall health. For example, moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking, keeps your heart and lungs healthy during and after pregnancy. Physical activity also helps improve your mood throughout the postpartum period. After you have your baby, exercise helps maintain a healthy weight, and when combined with eating fewer calories helps with weight loss.

According to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans—



Healthy women should get at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, during and after their pregnancy. It is best to spread this activity throughout the week



Healthy women who already do vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, such as running, or large amounts of activity can continue doing so during and after their pregnancy provided they stay healthy and discuss with their health care provider how and when activity should be adjusted over time.

10 minutes at a time is fine: We know 150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, but you don't have to do it all at once. Not only is it best to spread your activity out during the week, but you can break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day. As long as you're doing your activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time.

Aren't there risks involved with physical activity and pregnancy?

According to scientific evidence, the risks of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, are very low for healthy pregnant women. Physical activity does not increase your chances of low-birth weight, early delivery, or early pregnancy loss. It's also not likely that the composition or amount of your breast milk or your baby's growth will be affected by physical activity.