

KEEPING YOUR BODY HAPPY, HEALTHY AND INJURY FREE DURING YOUR PREGNANCY



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Grew up in Canberra, ACT with a passion for Rugby before a career ending injury decided his future would lie in other pursuits; namely Physiotherapy and the education and empowerment of his clients.

He founded Physio INQ in 2006, establishing his first practice in the outer suburbs of Sydney. This quickly grew to incorporate over 8 practices; all owned and managed with Irene Georgakopoulos, his business partner.

Together they employ roughly 40 full time staff, with modern education and a professional support network of GP's, specialists and other allied health practitioners.

He has found a new love. Writing. It is his way of spreading the collective wisdom of himself, his staff, his mentors and his business associates to the public. Most of his resources are free as he believes that when you empower people, they make sound decisions.

It has grown his clinics immeasurably over the years.

Today you will find him splitting his time between his other great love, writing and directing for film, as well as the odd day on the gold course.

The information contained in this ebook

“Keeping your body happy, healthy and injury free during pregnancy”

is for general guidance only. All information provided “as is” with no guarantee of completeness, accuracy, timeliness or of the results obtained from the use of this information, and without warranty of any kind, express or implied, including, but not limited to warranties of performance, health and fitness for a particular purpose.

Before taking on any exercise or treatment it is recommended that you contact your GP and/or obstetrician. If you feel any pain or discomfort or if your pain increases after exercise cease activity immediately. Stop exercise immediately if the following symptoms are present; vaginal bleeding or fluid loss, muscle weakness, pain in the low back/ pelvic/public area or add omen, shortness of breath, dizziness, headaches or feeling faint.

For some pregnant women, there may be conditions when exercise and physical activity may not be appropriate. This includes but is not exclusive to; hypertension or pre-eclampsia, premature rupture of membranes, an incompetent cervix, breech position in the third trimester, uncontrolled diabetes, persistent second or third trimester bleeding, placenta previa.

The information in this guide is not meant to replace a professional opinion and treatment strategy.

In no event will Physio INQ, be liable for any decision made or action taken in reliance on information in this guide or for an consequential, special or similar damages, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.



PREGNANCY IS AN OPTIMAL TIME TO LISTEN TO YOUR BODY AND TREAT IT WITH THE LOVE AND CARE IT DESERVES.

Finding a healthy balance between exercise and rest, understanding the changes to your body and how to avoid injury will ensure you remain happy and healthy throughout your pregnancy.



Exercising during pregnancy is recognised as a safe and beneficial activity to maintain healthy levels of fitness.

Benefits of exercise during pregnancy include:

Strengthening of the lower back and deep abdominal muscles, reducing back and pelvic pain

Increased fitness and muscle tone

Improved sleep

Minimize excessive maternal weight gain (which can contribute to gestational diabetes)

It is important to exercise safely and be aware of how your body will respond to exercise.

A number of physiotherapists offer prenatal Pilates and yoga classes that are endorsed by obstetricians.

These classes are focused on core stability, stretching and mobility, relaxation and pelvic floor strengthening.



There are also exercises you can do at home!

THE PELVIC FLOOR

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that support the uterus, bladder and bowel.

During pregnancy the pelvic floor weakens due to weight gain and hormonal changes that soften and stretch the muscles and tissues.

To help counteract the weakening of this area, exercises are recommended. These two exercises can be practised daily to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.

EXERCISE 1 - ENDURANCE PELVIC EXERCISE

This exercise will train the pelvic floor muscles to support the weight of your growing baby for extended periods of time.

1. Find a position where we can feel your pelvic floor muscles working, this could be standing, sitting on a chair or kneeling.
2. To activate your pelvic floor muscles lift and squeeze in and around your 3 pelvic openings (vagina, urethra and anus).
3. Keep lifting and squeezing for 10 seconds.
4. Release and relax.
5. Repeat 20-30 times every day.

EXERCISE 2 - QUICK SQUEEZE

This exercise is a quick strong pelvic floor contraction. This will help you avoid unwanted bladder leakage during sudden movements such as a cough or sneeze.

1. Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles quickly and then let go.
2. Take a short rest in between.
3. Repeat 10-20 times every day.

If you are having difficulty feeling the tightening of these muscles ask a physiotherapist to help you get started.



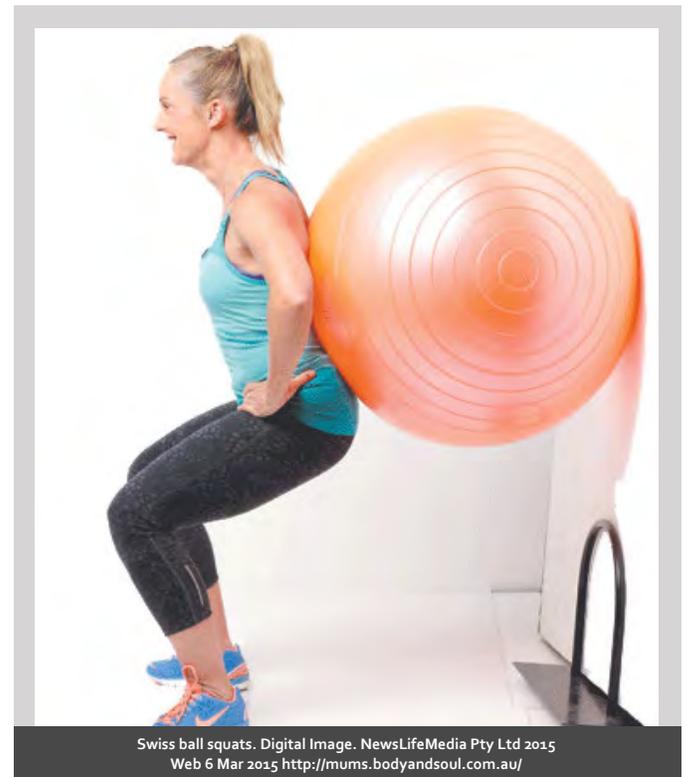
Exercises that can be performed daily to strengthen your core and stability are:

FITBALL SQUATS

Squats increase leg strength and endurance.

In your third trimester they can help with opening the pelvis to prepare for labour.

1. To support your pelvis and lower back place a fit ball against the wall. Allow enough room for your bottom to stick out below it.
2. Align your feet hip width apart, your feet should be pointing forward.
3. Sink down into a squat, tilting your pelvis back. Make sure your knees don't go past your toes.
4. Do 10 full squats and 5 pulses - 3 sets



SEATED LEG EXTENSIONS

1. Sit on a fit ball and draw up through your pelvic floor.
2. Lift one leg off the ground without moving your pelvis.
3. Straighten and bend at the knee.
4. Do 20 on each leg - 2 sets.



Seated leg extensions. Digital Image. NewsLifeMedia Pty Ltd 2015
Web 6 Mar 2015 <http://mums.bodyandsoul.com.au/>

TRICEP KICKBACKS

Tricep kickbacks maintain arm strength for carrying your baby.

1. Kneel on your hands and knees.
2. With one hand on the ground, raise the other arm to a 90 degree angle by your side.
3. Straighten this arm out, squeezing the muscle, then bend the elbow back to the start.
4. Do 15 on each arm - 2 sets.



Tricep kickbacks. Digital Image. NewsLifeMedia Pty Ltd 2015
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BALANCING TABLE

This exercise strengthens your core and pelvic floor.

1. Kneel on your hands and knees.
2. Lift your opposite arm and leg up off the floor (e.g., right arm, left leg), without moving your hips and spine.
3. Extend both out, hold for 5-10 seconds.
4. Repeat on the other side.
5. Do 5 sets (10 on each side).

*If you have symphysis pubic dysfunction avoid this exercise.



Two-legged horse stance. Digital Image. NewsLifeMedia Pty Ltd 2015
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TRULY THE MOST FANTASTIC WAY TO EXERCISE WHEN YOU ARE PREGNANT!

Go for a brisk walk with friends for 20-45 minutes per day. If you have elevated blood pressure it is advisable to seek medical advice prior to exercising in this way.

THE BEST PART?

You will need to do plenty of it after your baby is born to lose your baby fat, rock the little one to sleep and get some sunshine! If you need to work up to 45 minutes, no problem, just start with 20 minutes at a slow pace and increase by 1-2 minutes per day! [Walk on!](#)

CHANGES TO MUSCLES, LIGAMENTS AND JOINTS DURING AND AFTER PREGNANCY AFFECT THE WHOLE BODY.

The centre of mass changes, there is more pressure on the organs and there is increased weight to be carried. All of this in a relatively short time span often leads to back pain, pelvic pain and decreased circulation.





BACK PAIN IS A COMMON COMPLAINT DURING PREGNANCY, ESPECIALLY IN THE FINAL TRIMESTER.

The hormones created by your body during pregnancy cause muscles, joints and ligaments to become more elastic ready for your baby's birth. A growing baby also causes your centre of gravity to shift causing lower back pain and/or pressure on the sciatic nerve spreading pain to hips, bottom and legs. Improving your postural awareness, wearing external support such as a pelvic belt, regular massages and a gentle specific exercise program can help to relieve discomfort.

Back pain should not be something that you **"put up with"**. A physiotherapist can provide an assessment and a natural pain relief treatment plan.

PELVIC GIRDLE PAIN IS LOCATED IN THE CONNECTING JOINTS AROUND THE PELVIC RING.

Normally, when you lie down, stand up or walk your pelvis is in a stable, locked position. If you have pelvic pain it's an indication that you're doing these activities with a less stable pelvis, resulting in irritated joints and pain.

SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

Pain in your buttocks or the back of your legs when you stand on one leg, go upstairs or when you walk for longer than a few minutes. Pain feels like it jumps from side to side. Moving your legs apart, especially when sitting or lying down is painful.

The first line of treatment for this pelvic pain is physiotherapy and exercises that focus on core stability. Avoid sitting cross-legged on the floor and stretching your legs a part to climb out of the car as these postures open and spread your pelvic joints. Try to maintain a good tall posture when standing and sit to pull on trousers and shoes.





DURING PREGNANCY YOUR BLOOD VOLUME INCREASE BY 40% OR MORE PUTTING YOUR CIRCULATORY SYSTEM UNDER STRAIN.

Swollen hands or feet are common problems due to raised pressure in the abdomen, weight gain and downward pressure in the uterus. Try to rest on your side for 10-15 minutes throughout the day. Avoid prolonged standing or sitting by regularly changing position.

If you have to stand for long periods compression stockings may help. Three quick and easy exercises to improve your circulation:

PELVIC ROCKING

Kneel on your hands and knees and move your pelvis back and forth.

FOOT ROTATIONS

Sitting on a chair or fit ball, lift one leg into the air and turn your foot in a circular motion 5 - 10 times on each foot.

MASSAGE

Try massaging your legs from the ankle to the top of your thighs, kneading both the front and back of the legs.

ADVICE ON MOVEMENT

Hormone release (relaxin) causes the ligaments throughout the body to soften resulting in an increased chance of injury.

These tips on movement will help you stay comfortable and injury free.

To assess your posture, stand side on to a mirror.

You should be able to see the natural curve in your lower back.

During a lot of pregnancy's this curve will increase because of the weight of the baby and the forward movement of your centre of gravity.

TO MAINTAIN GOOD POSTURE:

Hold you head up straight with your chin in.

Keep your shoulder blades back and chest forward

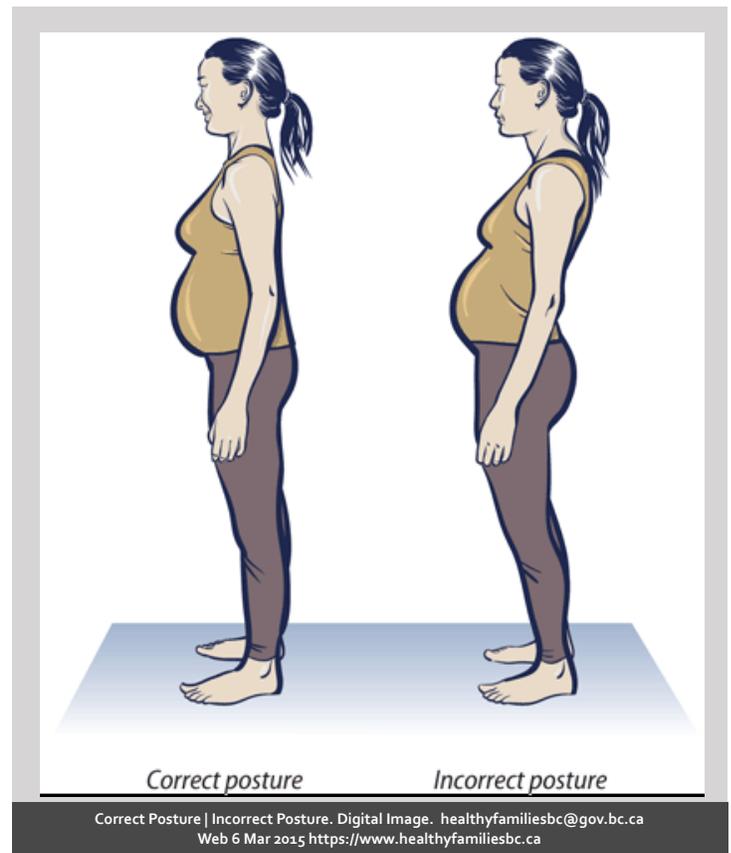
Stand with your feet pointing in the same direction and weight balanced evenly on both feet.

Do not tilt your pelvis forward or backward.

POSTURE

As your body shape and centre of gravity changes it can become easy to alter your posture to combat discomfort.

By paying close attention to your posture throughout your pregnancy you will minimise excess strain on your back.





SITTING POSITIONS - ALWAYS SIT BACK INTO A CHAIR AND IF YOU NEED EXTRA SUPPORT PLACE PILLOWS BEHIND YOUR LOWER BACK.

Avoid moving forward in your chair or car seat to make room for your growing belly, instead tilt the base of an adjustable chair or car seat down.

BENDING OVER

Don't bend over using your back and avoid heavy lifting. When you do need to bend over keep your back straight and squat using your knees.

STANDING UP

Sit on the edge of the chair, push your chest out and arch your back

Part your knees, lean forward, keep your back strong

Using your arms push up, move your head forwards and upwards.

TURNING OVER IN BED (FROM ONE SIDE TO ANOTHER)

Arch your lower back and tighten your pelvic floor and lower stomach muscles.

Bend your knees up as high as they will go and roll over.

GETTING OUT OF BED

Roll onto your side with your knees bent up high

Drop your feet over the edge of the bed

Using your arms push yourself up sideways

AS YOU PROGRESS THROUGH YOUR PREGNANCY IT WILL BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO FIND A SLEEPING POSITION THAT IS COMFORTABLE.

It is recommended you sleep on your left side as much as possible with pillows under your belly and between your knees. This will improve the blood flow and nutrients to the placenta. It also helps your kidneys eliminate fluid and waste products from your body, reducing swelling in your feet, ankles and hands.

Avoid sleeping on your back because the weight of your uterus lies on the intestines, major blood vessels and back muscles which can lead to muscle aches and pains and impaired circulation.

A wedge-shaped pillow or a full length body pillow provides good support and may ease back pain.



Boppy Pregnancy Sleep Wedge. Digital Image. SheKnows LLC, 2014
Web 6 Mar 2015 <http://www.pregnancyandbaby.com/>



PREGNANCY CAN BE AN EMOTIONAL AND STRESSFUL TIME.

By incorporating relaxation into your every day life you will be able to better manage the physical and mental changes in the coming months.

PREGNANCY MASSAGE

A pregnancy massage is a combination of relaxation and deep tissue massage. It is important to find a qualified therapist who specialises in ante-natal massage as there are certain pressure points that should be avoided. Massage can reduce stress hormones and relieve discomforts such as a sore back and swelling ankles.

BREATHING AND MEDITATION

Deep, controlled breathing can relieve stress and prepare you for labour. Find a comfortable position and close your eyes. Breathe in deeply and focus on the air entering your lungs. As you breathe out slowly clear your mind and release any stress.

If you find it difficult to stay focused for a long period of time, take 10 deep breathes in and out throughout your day. You can also find guided mediations online or try a yoga class that incorporates meditation.

For more information on how physiotherapy can assist you throughout your pregnancy or to make an appointment with a **qualified practitioner** contact

PHYSIO INQ



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Physio INQ is part of a network of Physio clinics across Australia, employing and empowering the highest quality of practical and support staff

We are a cutting edge business of superb ethical standards, striving to be the most professional and personal health care business you will come across.

Physio INQ, originally Greater West Physio was established to get rid of the old school and bring in the new. Our practitioners have open minds, strong hands and an unwavering goal to improve the lives of every client we come across. Our mission is simple- to bring quality health care to the common man in a way that is personable, professional and memorable.

Through the utilization of our Unique Total Care Philosophy Framework, through to the efficient and clean paperless offices we are driving, to the embracement of the digital age with online bookings, exercise prescription and more, Physio INQ is moving with you.

Focusing on the family unit, we have developed a training program of our staff to be better communicators and mediators of health. Our aim is to have a completely open and transparent health relationship with all of our clients from day one.

Every clinic is run by locals for locals. Being Powered By Physio INQ is a sign of corporate care. We train, cultivate and embrace only the brightest local talents and aim to deliver our service with a strong community focus.