

# PRACTICAL PREGNANCY

## Guide



### Changes During Pregnancy

Your body is growing a human being! How cool and amazing is that?! In order to do this great task your body will go through drastic hormone changes impacting your appetite, ligaments, energy levels, mood, etc. In order to accommodate for the growing baby, your posture will adjust, organs start to move out of the way, ribs widen and flare, and pelvis adjust accordingly. Your abdominals that previously provided your body with stability will stretch with your growing belly and take a back seat to other muscles that will pick up the slack and compensate to keep you moving and stable.

### Protect & Prevent



It is essential to listen to your body and look for "red flags" throughout pregnancy. Signs include feeling heaviness or that the baby is "right there", pressure or bearing down on the pelvic floor, doming or bulging on the abdominal wall, difficulty starting urine or second pee issue, and difficulty eliminating a bowel movement. It is important to work with a pelvic floor therapist to learn specific techniques to prevent injury and dysfunction such as prolapse & diastasis and to prepare for a smoother recovery postpartum. Maintaining hydration and adding coconut water and blueberries to your diet are easy natural ways to reduce constipation which will prevent straining on the toilet and reduce the stress on your pelvic floor.

### Master the Basics



360 breathing is an optimal breathing pattern which supports good core strength and control, good diaphragm excursion for supplying your body with oxygen and removing co2, reducing stress levels, and helps maintain a properly functioning pelvic floor that ebbs and flows along with your breath. Doing your best to maintain a good deep breathing pattern will also help maintain your core strength and mobility in your sides and back to decrease the stress on the linea alba as your body accommodates a growing baby. A strong inner core and a pelvic floor that can easily lengthen can improve delivery outcomes and reduce the risk of tearing. Seeing a pelvic floor therapist can help you master proper breathing and prepare you mentally and physically for labor and delivery.

### Modify & Adapt



Typically some time around the second trimester most women will need to start modifying and changing strategies for exercises and more strenuous daily tasks. Being aware of when and how to modify can be preventative for injury and other poor effects on the body and pelvic floor. Listen to what your body is telling you. Remember, just because you can doesn't mean you should and you have nothing to prove to anyone. Getting down on one knee to switch the laundry, pick up toys or items off the floor, and do other daily tasks is a good modification if you are experiencing back pain or having difficulty bending or squatting. Avoid holding your breath and exhale on the exertion of exercises and heavy lifting.

### Diet & Exercise

Research tells us a balanced diet and exercising during pregnancy has numerous positive benefits for you as well as baby. These benefits include reduced risk of gestational diabetes, increased fetoplacental growth rate, and improving the fetus's metabolic, immune, and nervous system responses throughout their entire life! Studies also show us that even if you didn't exercise before... it is still safe (if you have no contraindications) and beneficial to start in pregnancy. It is important to consider safety, intensity, and other related factors before engaging in an exercise and always consult with your healthcare professional if unsure.

