

Basic Guidelines

Using yoga to prepare for the birth of your baby.

When to Start Practicing

Women should take it easy for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy to allow their bodies to adjust to the changes of pregnancy. Our yoga classes are for healthy women in their 2nd and 3rd trimesters and can be safely attended right up until you go into labor. Consult with your physician/midwife before starting any exercise program. Women who have a history of miscarriage or who had trouble conceiving should wait until 16 weeks to give the pregnancy time to settle. Talk to your yoga instructor about some simple and safe exercises that can be practiced in the first trimester.

Guidelines for Practice

The first thing to remember is that every pregnancy is different, even for the same woman, so it is best to listen to your body at all times and only do what feels right to you. If you are new to yoga, now is not the time for over-achieving, so take it easy, especially when trying new poses.

What to wear: Wear lightweight, non-restrictive clothing. Many women wear leggings and t-shirts. Yoga is practiced with bare feet; please do not wear socks during class because this can pose a risk of slipping and falling. Some women like to put on socks and pullovers before relaxation.

Equipment: Start each class with a sticky mat, a bolster and a blanket. Check with your teacher to see if equipment is provided.

Regular Practice: Pregnant women should get regular exercise a minimum of 3 times a week. Exercising less than this or exercising sporadically can actually be harmful. If you can't make it to yoga class three times per week, talk to your instructor about at-home exercises and prenatal yoga videos. Swimming and brisk walking are great exercise options during pregnancy.

Get off your back: The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists cautions women about exercising on their backs after 12 weeks because the weight of the enlarging uterus can compress the vena cava which will restrict blood and oxygen flow to the fetus. Other experts give similar cautions ranging from 12 to 20 weeks depending on maternal weight gain and uterus size. Mamaste Yoga instructors do not teach supine (back-lying) postures to 2nd and 3rd trimester students.

Food & Water: Please eat a small snack of complex carbohydrates and/or protein, 30 minutes to 1 hour before class to prevent blood sugar from falling. Also bring a bottle of water to class to sip on occasionally. Normally the stomach and bladder should be empty before practicing yoga, mainly because many postures increase intra-abdominal pressure and can cause problems. We do not do these postures in prenatal classes so it is fine to eat lightly before class and drink water during class. Please do empty the bladder before class and feel free to visit the bathroom as often as needed during class.



nurturing mother, nurtures the child

Listen to Your Body: You must remember during any exercise, should you feel uncomfortable, discontinue the movement. You must listen to your body. If it's tired or fatigued, do not push it. Your body is doing enough work creating your baby, be gentle with yourself. If an instructor holds a position too long, feel free to come out and rest in child's pose. Report any pregnancy concerns to your health care provider. Stop exercising immediately and contact your physician/midwife if you experience any of the following:

- ❖ Vaginal Bleeding
- ❖ Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- ❖ Uterine contractions with 20 minute or shorter intervals
- ❖ Vomiting more than a few times in 1 hour
- ❖ Sudden dimmed or blurred vision
- ❖ Sudden dizziness or faintness
- ❖ Severe persistent headache
- ❖ Leaking of fluid from vagina
- ❖ Reduced fetal activity
- ❖ Sudden swelling (edema)
- ❖ Frequent burning urination
- ❖ Pain of any kind: back, pubic bone, chest, abdominal
- ❖ Heart rhythm abnormalities
- ❖ Shortness of breath not associated with exercise

After 35 Weeks: If your baby is still breech at 35 weeks your instructor can give you some gentle postures to do at home that have been known to facilitate turning. Regardless of whether your baby has turned, we do not recommend you practice full unsupported squats after 35 weeks; you may practice them on a bolster. When labor begins you may return to using full squats if you feel like it.

If you have questions about yoga or any of these guidelines please contact a certified prenatal yoga teacher. Mamaste Yoga™ salutes the mother in all of us and nurtures the mother who nurtures the child. Mamaste!