

Pregnancy Exercises: Strength

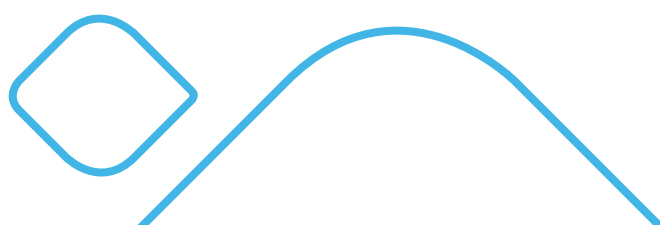
Benefits of exercising during pregnancy

- ❖ Reduces pregnancy related pain and physical discomfort
- ❖ Improves sleep and sense of well-being
- ❖ Lowers the risk of developing gestational diabetes
- ❖ Improves cardiovascular function and reduces blood pressure
- ❖ Reduces bone density loss

Things to remember

- ❖ Listen to your body and do exercises that feel good
- ❖ Modify or stop the exercises if you experience discomfort or pain
- ❖ Contact your physiotherapist if you have any concerns about your exercise programme
- ❖ Keep hydrated and eat a healthy, balanced diet

These exercises are to be done with the guidance of your physiotherapist.



Breathing with exercise:

It is important not to hold your breath while doing these exercises. It can be difficult to coordinate your breathing while thinking about all the other aspects of the exercise. However, try to breathe out with the effort and breathe in as you relax. Please see the videos for more help with this.

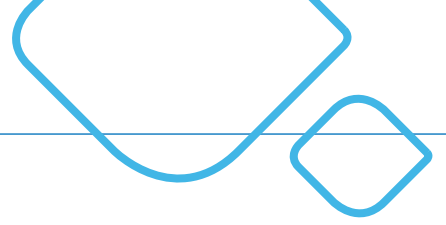
1. Hug the baby

- Take a deep breath in to prepare
- As you breathe out, pull your tummy button in towards your spine and squeeze your pelvic floor.
- Breathe out and relax everything

2. Sit to stand

- Stand with your feet hip width apart.
- Slowly sit down.
- Squeeze your pelvic floor and bottom muscles as you stand.
- Relax your pelvic floor as you sit back down





To help engage your tummy muscles, complete this exercise while squeezing a ball or cushion:

- Slowly squat down.
 - As you stand, squeeze your bottom muscles, pelvic floor and the ball between your hands.
 - Release the squeeze as you sit back down
- See [here](#) for video



3. Mini lunge

- Whilst holding on to a chair for balance, place one foot a stride in front of the other.
 - Bend both knees simultaneously as you lower down. The back heel will naturally rise from the ground.
 - Squeeze your bottom and pelvic floor as you rise back up.
- See [here](#) for video



4. Calf raises

- Whilst holding on to a chair for balance, stand tall with knees straight and come up on to your tip toes.
- Hold for 1 second before slowly bringing your heels back down on to the ground.



5. Banded exercises in sitting:

- Sit comfortably on a chair with both feet flat on the floor. Place a resistance band under your feet and hold onto either side of the band.

a. Banded row

- Use the above “hug the baby” technique and pull the band back as you squeeze your shoulder blades together. Keep elbows tucked in.
- Return to the start position.

- Repeat 10x
See [here](#) for video

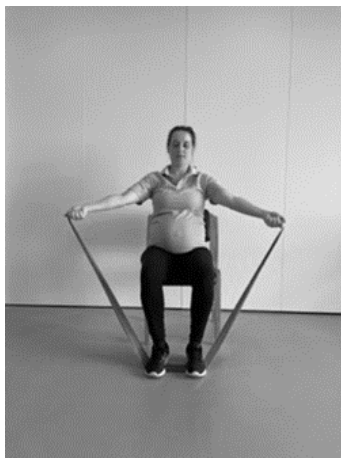


b. Biceps curl

- “Hug the baby” and pull the band up in front of you by bending your elbows
- Return to the start position.
- Repeat 10x
See [here](#) for video

c. Side lift

- “Hug the baby” and pull the band out to the side. Keep elbows straight.
- Return to the start position.
- Repeat 10x
See [here](#) for video



6. Banded pull downs in standing

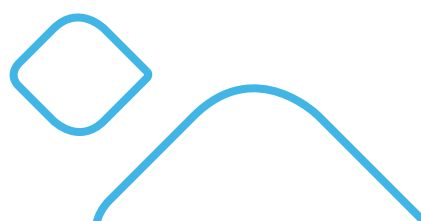
- Place the resistance band over a high, supportive object, such as a door frame
 - Stand tall, holding onto either side of the band.
 - “Hug the baby” and pull the band downwards.
 - Relax to return to the star position.
- See [here](#) for video

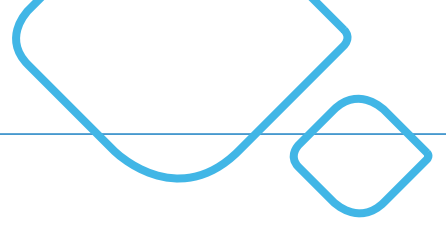


7. 4-point kneeling with leg extension and/or arm extension

- Find a comfortable surface and lower yourself to a four-point kneeling position
 - Keep hand under shoulders and knees under hips. Keep a flat back position throughout.
 - Use the “hug the baby” technique as you slowly straighten one leg out behind you.
 - Return to the start position.
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- To progress, slowly straighten opposite arm and leg, engaging the core as above to ensure hips and shoulders remain parallel before slowly returning to starting position.

See [here](#) for video





8. Wall press up

- a. To start, place both hands on the wall, shoulder width apart.
- b. Slowly lower your upper body towards the wall by bending your elbows.
- c. “Hug the baby” and push through your arms, straightening your elbows to return to the starting position.



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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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