

Top form

# PREGNANCY MYTHS BUSTED!



Pregnancy is not the time to make fitness gains or set goals, but you can still exercise despite what you might have heard. Find out how to do so safely...

**WORDS:** Tatum Nelson

**T**here can be a fear surrounding exercise during pregnancy. Your body is already going through a momentous change – and you may wonder if it's safe to still keep up with your exercise routine. Pregnancy is a time to be more receptive to your body's needs than ever. Exercise can make you feel good, lift your mood, help manage weight gain and prepare your body for the birth, but it's essential that it's undertaken with your safety and that of your unborn child coming first.

Some days you'll feel full of energy, and others you will feel tired. Be responsive to this; don't stick to a programme just because it's written – this is a time of adaptation.

Be careful not to push through any fatigue and if you're finding it hard, it's important to stop. What's more, do not undertake any forms of exercise where you risk being hit or falling over.

## 1 Healthy hormones

When you're pregnant your body will produce a hormone called relaxin in preparation for the birth. It will make all of your ligaments and tendons a lot more flexible than before. Bear this in mind when undertaking any exercise and be careful not to push too hard and risk injuring yourself.

## 2 Strengthen your muscles

Strengthening your pelvic floor during pregnancy is really important. These muscles will come under a lot of strain throughout pregnancy and labour, so following simple pelvic floor exercises daily can really help.

## 3 SAY NO TO SIT-UPS

AFTER 16 WEEKS DO NOT DO ANY EXERCISE ON YOUR BACK, AS THE WEIGHT OF YOUR BUMP CAN PRESS ON BLOOD VESSELS AND LEAD TO FAINTING. SIT-UPS ARE ALSO A NO-NO DURING PREGNANCY OR THE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE BIRTH. THERE ARE EXERCISE YOU CAN DO TO STRENGTHEN YOUR ABDOMINALS AND EASE BACK ACHE, BUT THESE ARE DONE ON ALL FOURS, IN THE BOX POSITION.

