

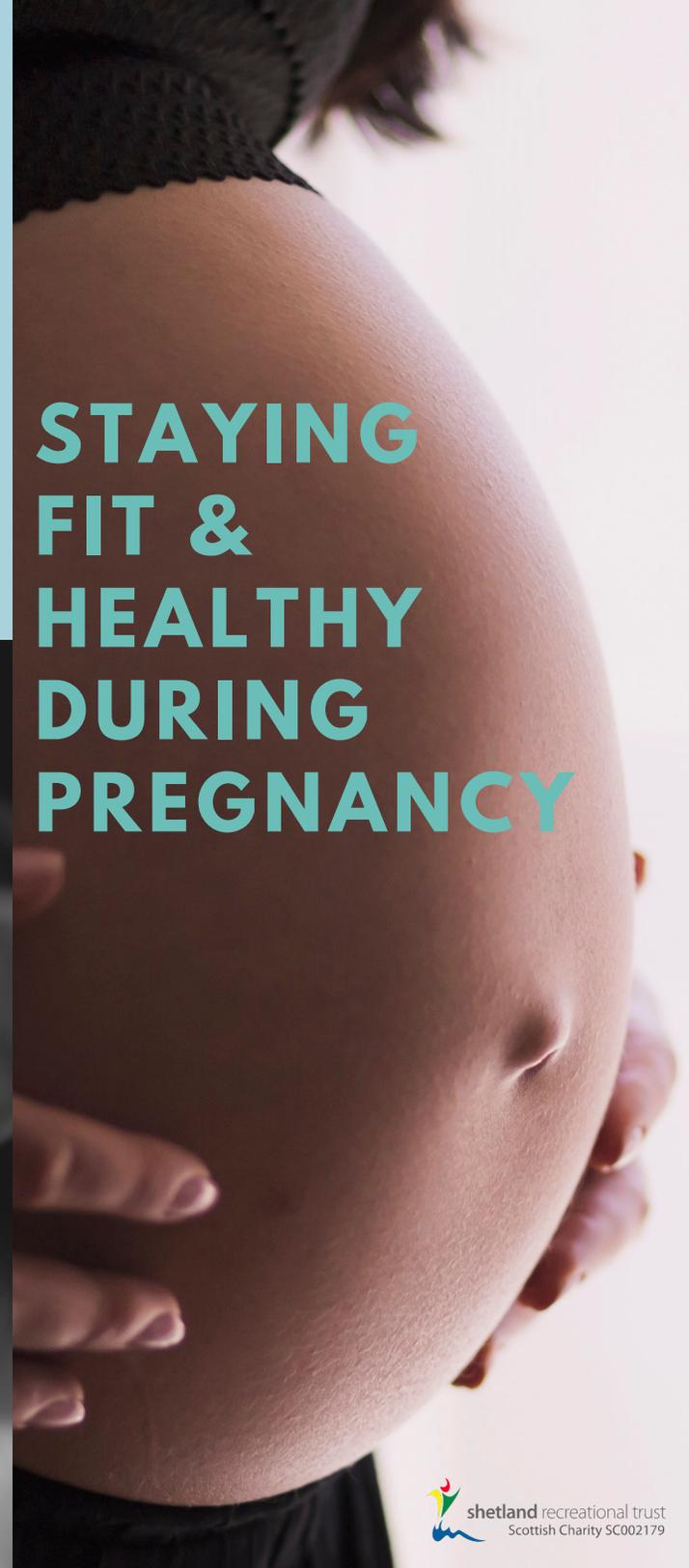
- It is fine to continue resistance training but reduce your original weights and ensure good technique at all times to protect knees. Free weights/muscle tone classes are an excellent way to train but follow these guidelines: reduce your weights at 12 weeks by at least 5%; 20 weeks by a further 5-10% and avoid lifting both arms above head (shoulder press); at 30 weeks you want to have reduced weights by 50% of original weights.
- At 20 weeks avoid exercises that involve you lying on your back or using a barbell behind your neck.
- Avoid heavy lifting as this can encourage you to hold your breath which can cause your blood pressure to rise.
- Abdominal & pelvic floor exercises - avoid sit ups, crunches, oblique twists and any exercises lying flat on your back from 20 weeks. It is important to work on pelvic floor exercises (as often as possible) - there are many available on the internet or ask your midwife or fitness professional.
- Avoid overstretching due to looser ligaments and joints and focus on maintenance stretching and avoid the following stretches: splits, hurdle stretches, crab stretches, downward/upward dog (unless experienced), abdominal stretches, standing & seated touching toes.
- Focus on postural exercises to counter the rounding of shoulders and hyperextension of lumbar spine due to growing baby. Roll shoulders back and down, sit upright pulling chin in gently to lengthen back of neck. Tuck tailbone under towards heels. If you sit at a desk get up and walk around to regularly improve circulation.
- Avoid strenuous exercise in hot/humid weather; hot tubs or saunas; contact, racquet and team sports (after 12 weeks); skiing/horseback riding/diving/waterskiing/jet skiing.



**Eat a balanced healthy diet, eat before and after exercise to keep both you and baby fuelled, keep hydrated (2 litres of fluid daily), rest and look forward to welcoming your baby to the world.**



**STAYING  
FIT &  
HEALTHY  
DURING  
PREGNANCY**



## Exercise during pregnancy

It is one of the most amazing times of a woman's life but one that can be filled with doubt and worries about the effect of exercise on your growing baby.

Appropriate exercise during pregnancy has many benefits for both mother & baby while maintaining good fitness levels will prepare you for the birth and helps with a quick recovery.

Adapted from the University of Glasgow Sport & Recreation

### TRIMESTER 1 (1-12 weeks)



Many changes are happening to your body even though at this point they may not be noticeable. You may notice some of the following:

- Weight gain as your body starts to store fat for your baby
- You may experience nausea at any time of the day
- You may be more tired, even exhausted, than normal
- Due to hormones you may be more emotional
- Tender breasts

#### Exercise during trimester 1

If you are a regular exerciser it is safe to continue as normal. If you normally lift weights, now is not the time to increase your weights, stick to familiar exercises. If you feel exhausted, nauseous and unable to keep your normal routine, try and keep active (walk/swim) as it is good for both you and baby.

If you suffer from low blood pressure leaving you feeling dizzy and lightheaded you may need to avoid certain exercises, especially ones that involve quick transitions from lying to standing, quick changes of direction or explosive movements. If these symptoms do not subside or disappear it is important to consult your midwife or doctor who will advise you on exercise participation. You may have to take a break or change your exercise programme.

If you are new to exercise you should consult your doctor or midwife for medical clearance before starting an exercise programme. This is not the time to embark on a new fitness regime or lose weight but instead a time to maintain a good level of general fitness during pregnancy. A simple walking programme may be all you need.

You should always inform your fitness instructor if you are pregnant, they may have to adapt certain exercises for you.

### TRIMESTER 2 (13-28 weeks)



During this period you should (hopefully) be starting to feel less nausea with renewed energy levels - 'Blooming' or 'Blossoming'.

- Your bump appears and weight increases as baby grows
- Your joints and ligaments become looser due to the hormone 'relaxin' and this can cause some aches and pains
- As the size of your baby increases, you become breathless quicker during exercise as your diaphragm is being pushed up; your balance may become slightly off due to a shift in centre of gravity; the pressure of your growing baby on your bladder will cause you to visit the toilet more often
- You may become lightheaded when lying on your back or when you stand up from a lower position
- You may have fluid retention
- Loss of concentration, forgetfulness or clumsiness may occur.

### TRIMESTER 3 (29-40 weeks)



Most of the changes experienced in trimester 2 continue through 3.

- Increased weight along with lack of sleep may leave you feeling fatigued; frequent trips to the toilet through the night and increasing size of bump can make finding a comfortable sleeping position difficult.
- As baby grows the pressure against your stomach increases which can cause heartburn, eating smaller meals more often may help.

Each pregnancy is different. You may feel happy to exercise or you may feel uncomfortable and wish to reduce the amount you do. It is advisable to reduce the impact of exercise you do especially in the latter stages but you can still get a good workout with less impact.

#### Some things to consider when exercising during trimesters 2&3:

- Cardio exercise - to avoid overheating and taking energy away from baby it is advisable to do no more than 30-40 minutes at a time. When running and jumping with the extra weight of your baby adding additional strain on your pelvic floor & core muscles it is recommended that you stop running after 20 weeks and start brisk walking or gentle jogging/walking. Swimming is a great exercise to do through pregnancy. Some women prefer to use a kick movement when pregnant to avoid irritating the pubis. In the gym all cardio equipment can be used but it is recommended that you reduce the intensity as the pregnancy proceeds. As the bump grows you may find the bikes become uncomfortable; the cross trainer is a good option provided there is no irritation felt in the pubic bone area; rowing is fine as it is a whole body low impact exercise but as the bump grows it may become more difficult to transfer on and off and posture could become compromised.
- In the studio aerobics classes are an excellent choice but keep impact low and avoid twists, turns, quick changes of direction and wide leg movements especially in the latter stages of 2 and 3 to help avoid lower back pain and a condition called pubis disfunction. If you are a regular exercise participant in classes such as circuits, boxfit, combat, HIIT it is fine to continue but with adaptations: avoid jumping and high impact moves, twists and turns, high kicking and exercises lying on your front, sit ups and crunches. It is recommended that you stop these types of classes after 20 weeks. You can continue to take part in step classes but keep reducing your step height as your pregnancy advances and avoid fast turns and quick changes after 20 weeks.