

Prenatal Workout

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According to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies do not need to limit their exercise. In fact, women who have been participating in a regular exercise program can continue their program without major modifications. However, those who plan to begin a new exercise program should consult with their healthcare provider before beginning. Regular cardiovascular exercise, 30 minutes 5 days a week, is preferable to intermittent activity. Resistance training (included here) should be performed 2 to 3 days per week on non-consecutive days. Also, stretching and yoga are highly encouraged. The equipment needed for the following workout is an exercise mat, a core ball (towel or carpet) or chair, and 3-5 lbs. dumbbells or tubing. Definitions: Repetitions are the number of times you perform a specific exercise without stopping. A set is a group of repetitions performed without stopping. Most of the following exercises should include 2-4 sets of 10 repetitions.

Benefits of exercise during pregnancy (ACSM):

- Improved aerobic and muscular fitness.
- Facilitation of recovery from labor.
- Enhanced maternal psychological well-being that may help counter feelings of stress, anxiety, and/or depression frequently experienced during pregnancy.
- Establishment of permanent healthy lifestyle habits.
- More rapid return to pre-pregnancy weight, strength, and flexibility levels.
- Fewer obstetric interventions.
- Shorter active labor and less pain.
- Less weight gain.
- Improved digestion and reduced constipation.
- Greater energy reserve.
- Reduced “postpartum belly”.
- Reduced back pain during pregnancy.

Tips for exercising during pregnancy:

- Check with your healthcare provider before beginning any new program.
- Steer clear of dangerous sports.
- Wear the right clothes.
- Warm-up and cool down.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Don't lie flat on your back.
- Keep moving.
- Don't overdo it or get overheated.
- Get up slowly.
- Make it a habit.

Warning signs: stop if experiencing the following (ACSM):

- Any bleeding or gush of liquid from vagina.
- Sudden swelling of ankles or legs.
- Dizziness or shortness of breath.
- Severe abdominal pain.
- Excessive fatigue.
- Chest pain.
- Headaches.
- Elevated pulse or blood pressure that persists post-exercise.
- Contractions or premature labor.
- Decreased fetal movement.
- Insufficient weight gain.



Start



Finish

Wide (Sumo) Squats with Core Ball

Stand with the core ball between the body and the wall, with the core ball resting in the small (lower part) of the back. Bring legs out past shoulder width with feet at a 45° angle. Slowly squat down until thighs are parallel with the floor making sure knees stay in line with toes. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between sets.

Chair Squats

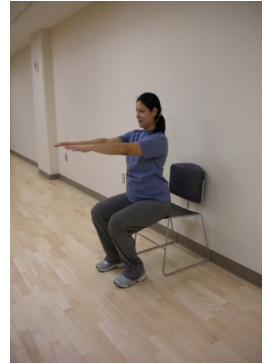
Start by standing in front of a chair with feet shoulder width apart facing forward and arms straight out at shoulder level for balance. Slowly squat down, keeping knees in line with toes and arms out. Squat until butt reaches seat. At this point there are two options. The first, which is easier, is to rest all weight on the chair. The second is to touch the chair and immediately stand back up. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between sets.



Start



Mid



Finish

Abductors (outer thighs)

Lie on side on a mat. Support upper body with forearm, making sure shoulder and elbow are in line. Rest other arm on the top leg. Lift top leg up about 12 inches and hold for 1-2 seconds before releasing back down. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between. Repeat for the other leg.



Start



Finish

Adductors (inner thighs)

Lie on side on a mat. Support upper body with forearm, making sure shoulder and elbow are in line. Rest the other arm on the top leg. Bend top leg and bring over bottom leg to rest foot on the floor in front of the bottom leg. Bring bottom leg off the floor about 12 inches (or as much as possible) and hold for 1-2 seconds before releasing back down. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between. Repeat for the other leg.



Start



Finish

Glutes



Start

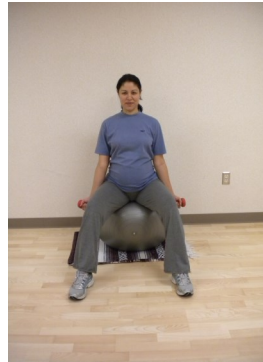


Finish

Start on all fours with arms and legs at 90° angles to the floor. Keep head neutral. Extend one leg straight back while contracting glutes making sure to keep core tight. Hold for 1-2 seconds before releasing back to starting position. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between. Repeat for the other leg.

Bicep Curls (Core Ball or Chair)

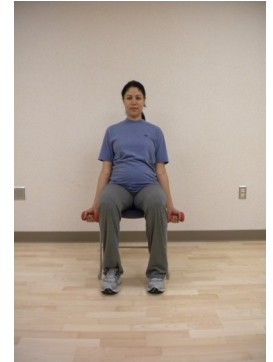
If using a core ball, make sure to be on carpet or put a towel or blanket underneath for added stability. Sit on the ball (with a wide stance) or the chair and start with the arms with weights down at side. Contract the arms up to shoulder level making sure to keep wrists in neutral position (do not bend forward). Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.



Start



Finish



Modification



Start



Finish



Modification

Triceps Extension (Core Ball or Chair)

If using a core ball, make sure to be on carpet or put a towel or blanket underneath for added stability. Sit on the ball (with wide stance) or the chair and hold one dumbbell with both hands. Put hands close together on the handle of the dumbbell and bring behind the head. With elbows staying tucked in close to the ears, extend arms straight up. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.

Bent Over Rows (Core Ball or Chair)

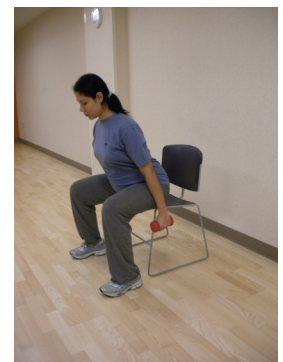
If using a core ball, make sure to be on carpet or put a towel or blanket underneath for added stability. Sit on the ball (with wide stance) or the chair with a dumbbell in each hand. Bend at the hips so the back is at about a 45° angle, arms down at sides. Bring arms up to hips while pinching shoulder blades together making sure to keep elbows in and close to the body. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.



Start



Finish



Modification



Start



Finish



Modification

Chest Press (Core Ball or Chair)

If using a core ball, make sure to be on carpet or put a towel or blanket underneath for added stability. Sit on the ball (with wide stance) or the chair and bring exercise band around back and underneath arms. Hold onto the band with elbows out. Extend arms out straight while keeping back upright. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.

Side Overheads (Core Ball)

Stand holding core ball overhead with arms straight. Bend at waist from one side to the other, stopping in the center for a second. Keep core tight by pulling belly into spine. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.



Start



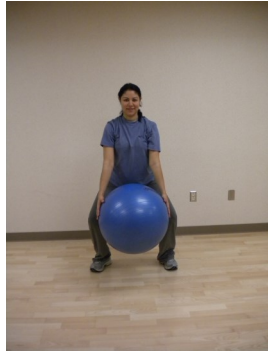
Right



Left



Start



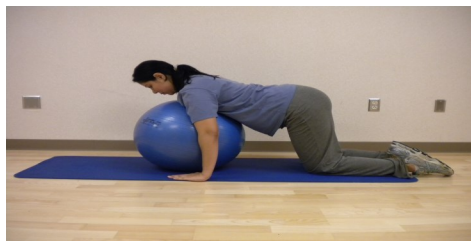
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Front Overheads (Core Ball)

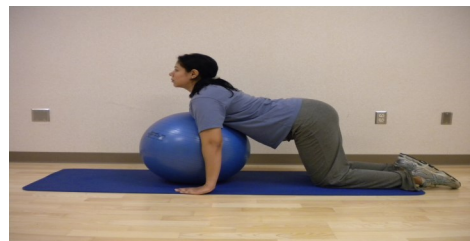
Stand holding core ball overhead. Bend knees and contract abdominals as the ball is brought down to knees. Keep arms straight and knees in line with toes. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.

Back Extensions (Core Ball)

Start on all fours on the floor. Bring the core ball (55cm size) underneath chest. With arms resting on the ground bring upper body a little off the ball (1-3 inches). Keep core (belly) pulled up into spine and head in line with the spine. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.



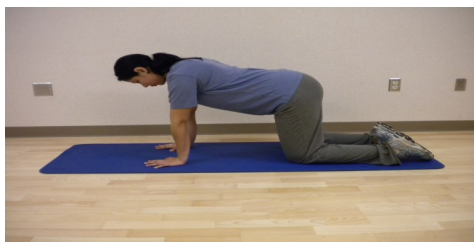
Start



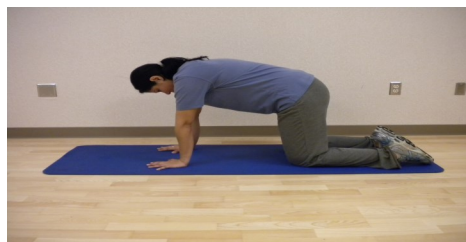
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Abdominals (Abs)

Start on all fours on the floor. Back should be parallel to the floor and head in line with the spine. While breathing out, contract your transverse abdominis (the deep belly muscle) and lift toward spine. The back should not move and stay in a neutral position, parallel to the floor. Release and repeat for 10 repetitions. Perform 2-4 sets with 30 seconds of rest in between.



Start



Finish

Cat Dog Stretch

Start on all fours on the floor. Back should be parallel to the floor and head in line with the spine. The Cat: While breathing out, contract your transverse abdominis (the deep belly muscle) and lift toward spine. Now arch the back upward to form a curve as the head tilts down. The Dog: Slowly lower the back to neutral and continue beyond so the back is now arched down. The head will now be lifted up looking straight ahead. Hold each position for about 3 seconds and do 10 repetitions.



Start



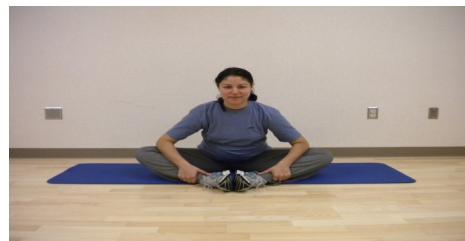
Finish

Butterfly Stretch

Sit upright with the bottom of the feet touching and knees out wide. Back needs to be neutral (straight up and down). Hold onto feet. Hold this position for 10-30 seconds. Then lean forward a bit and push elbows down onto the knees to get a deeper stretch. Hold for 10-30 seconds.



Start



Finish