

Pre-natal Home Workout

www.fitactive.co.uk
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Mini Workout Pack

Resistance bands are widely and cheaply available online or from any good sports store. They are very versatile and a great investment for pre- and post-natal exercises. Unless you are an experienced exerciser, choose a light resistance band to start with.

Safety

If you have any concerns about starting an exercise regime during pregnancy, consult your Healthcare Practitioner.

At all times, work at your own pace and progress gradually.

If you feel any pain or severe discomfort during exercise, stop the exercise.

If you are in any doubt about your technique, consult an exercise professional before continuing with the exercises.

If you experience any of the following after or during exercise then consult your GP as soon as possible:

- Vaginal bleeding
- Shortness of breath before exertion
- Headache
- Chest pain
- Muscle weakness
- Calf pain or swelling
- Preterm labour
- Decreased foetal movement
- Amniotic fluid leakage

These exercises are undertaken at your own risk.

Neutral Spine

Always ensure that you have a natural curve at the middle of your back (lumbar region). As you work through an exercise, make sure your muscles are holding the curve in place. If you feel your back arching, then stop at the point just prior to this and return to the start of the exercise. Your strength will gradually improve, it is important to keep practicing with the correct technique.

Breathing

Breathe throughout each exercise. As a rule of thumb, breathe out on exertion when the exercise is hardest. Never hold your breath.

Superman



- From an all-fours position, raise the right arm and extend the left leg.
- Keep the leg straight at the knee and feel your bum muscles working as you raise and hold for 2 – 3 seconds.
- Return the hand and knee to the floor
- Repeat with the other arm and leg.
- If this is tricky at first, start by raising one arm and one leg at a time before progressing to raising the arm and leg together.
- Repeat 8 – 10 times.

Squat with Band Press



- Using a resistance band around the upper back, start in a standing position with a neutral spine.
- Bend the knees to move into a squat position, maintaining a neutral spine and keeping knees over toes.
- Exhale and extend the arms
- Use the upper back and arm muscles to extend the band away from the body. Continues...
- Inhale, bend the elbows and return to a standing position.

- Adjust the band to make the move more or less difficult.
- This exercise can also be done without a band.
- During late pregnancy, you may need to leave out the band and just squat, using a chair for balance and support.

Seated Band Pull



- Sit on the floor with legs outstretched, a resistance band around your feet and held in two hands.
- Keep the shoulder blades together and imagine them moving downwards.
- Take your feet as wide as you need to, to accommodate your bump and if necessary, loop the band around one foot only. You will need to turn your body towards the foot with the band around it so be sure to repeat with the band around the other foot.
- Wiggle a bit to engage your bum bones with the floor as you sit up as tall as you can – top of head up towards ceiling.
- Use slow and controlled moves throughout.
- Bend the elbows and take them wide, level with your shoulders.
- Squeeze the back muscles together and feel the arm muscles working to stretch the ends of the band towards the body.
- Extend the arms and repeat.

Calf Stretch

This and the following exercise are an excellent way of helping to prevent leg cramps.



- Roll up a towel, yoga mat or similar as shown.
- Place the ball of the foot on top of one end of the towel.
- Place the other foot on the floor as if you are taking a step forwards.
- Feel a stretch in the calf of the foot on the towel.
- Keep the hips stacked above the heel of the foot on the towel.
- Stay upright in the body
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
- Repeat on the other leg.
- Repeat this stretch 3 times a day to help prevent calf cramps.

Leg Stretches



- You will need a rolled up towel/yoga mat and a chair. Remove shoes and socks. A mirror is also very useful for this.
- Put the ball of the feet on the towel with the heels on the floor.
- Have the outer edges of the feet in parallel – you need to feel slightly “pigeon-toed”.

- Lean forward and rest the hands on the seat of the chair.
- Tilt the pelvis so that your spine has a lumbar (mid back) curve. Check in a mirror if possible.
- Hold this position for 30 seconds then return slowly to standing.
- Repeat 3 times.
- Try to do this stretch 3 times a day to help prevent calf cramps.

Cool down

Cool down by walking around for 5 minutes or so then stretch to finish off. Hold each stretch for 10 – 15 seconds and stretch both sides evenly: Do not over stretch.

- Thigh muscles – stand on one leg, bend the other knee and lift the heel towards the bum. Take hold of the raised foot by the laces and pull the heel close to the bum. Ease the knee back and push the hips forward to feel a stretch in the thigh.
- Bum muscles – sit cross-legged and lean forwards from the hips resting the hands on the floor for support. Feel the stretch in one bum muscle. Swap legs to stretch the other side.
- Upper back – sitting or standing, “hug a tree” by interlinking the fingers of the hands with palms facing you at chest height. Lean forward from the upper back only. Relax the neck and ease apart the muscles between shoulder blades and spine.
- Chest – with the hands behind the back, interlink the fingers. Ease the hands away from the bum and open up the chest, feeling a stretch across the front of the chest.