

PREGNANCY EXERCISES FOR YOUR BACK

The following exercises are designed to help relieve the discomfort you may feel as your back tries to support your expanding belly. They help to strengthen and stretch the muscles of the back, hips, and abdomen.

Pelvic Tilt

- ◆ Start on your hands and knees, with your hands directly under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Your back should be straight, not arched. Align your head and neck with your straight back.
- ◆ Press up with your lower back (like an angry cat) and hold for a few seconds, then relax to the straight back position.
- ◆ Do this five times.
- ◆ This same exercise may be performed in the standing position. Bend your knees, thrust your hips slightly forward, and hold your arms out front for balance. Then round your back in the angry-cat position. Return to neutral.

Reverse Curl

- ◆ Kneel on your hands and knees with your knees 8-10 inches apart. Arms should be straight.
- ◆ Come backward slowly tucking your head towards your knees. Keep your hands and arms in the same position. They will now be extended.
- ◆ Hold to the count of five, then come back to the neutral position.
- ◆ Do this five times.

Pelvic Lifts

- ◆ Lie on your back, with your knees bent, your feet on the floor, and your arms at your sides.
- ◆ Slowly raise your hips off of the floor.
- ◆ Slowly lower your hips back to the floor.
- ◆ Do this 5-10 times.
- ◆ Lying on your back is okay for short periods of time. Do not stay on your back for more than 5-10 minutes.

Frontward Stretch

- ◆ Sit in a chair with your back straight. Relax your arms.
- ◆ Bend forward slowly so your chest is as close to your knees as possible. Keep your arms dangling forward. If you feel pressure or pain in your abdomen, discontinue this exercise. Hold this position to the count of five.
- ◆ Lift your torso up, keeping your back straight.
- ◆ Do this five times.

Table-Top Bends

- ◆ Stand with your legs apart, knees slightly bent, with your hands on your hips.
- ◆ Bend forward slowly. Do not arch your back.
- ◆ Do this 10 times.

Lower Back Stretch

- ◆ Stand with your feet 10-12 inches apart with your back against a wall.
- ◆ Press your lower back into the wall and hold for the count of 10.
- ◆ Release.
- ◆ Do this 10 times.

As with any exercise program, be sure to check with your practitioner before initiating these exercises.