

I was moderately or very physically active before my pregnancy

Maintaining regular exercise

You will probably have maintained regular exercise during pregnancy – exercise will have become a routine for you and a really necessary part of your lifestyle. In your pelvis, there are bands of tissue that join the separate bones and hold them firmly together. When you are pregnant, your body produces a hormone called relaxin that relaxes these ligaments.

This helps you prepare for giving birth – it means that these tissues will be able to stretch more than they do in non-pregnant women. It also means that they can be ‘over-stretched’ and get injured, so you need to listen to your body and you may need to modify your exercise routine as your pregnancy advances. So for example if you are a regular runner you may need to switch to running in a pool to reduce the impact during the 2nd and 3rd trimester and you could combine this with something like swimming, which is low-impact.

Your pelvic floor muscles are also affected during pregnancy, and they, also, can become weakened and be prone to injury.

Continuing to find time for you

You may find it more difficult than before to continue exercising at the same pace and intensity as before pregnancy or with the same group of people. Could you continue to join friends for part of your regular routine or for some exercise sessions? If you join an exercise class specifically for women (aquanatal, or antenatal yoga) you might like to team up with one or two of the other women to have shared walks in the park.

Find your motivation

We are all familiar with good intentions fizzling out by February. Start by answering ‘Why?’ Why do you want to maintain a regular exercise routine? Do you want to feel healthy, sharp and strong? Maybe exercise gives you a positive rush and helps you to manage your daily stresses? Whatever your reason, research suggests that the stronger the reason ‘why’ you take on a new activity the more likely you are to stick with it.