

## Trimester three welcome!

Congratulations, you are doing a fantastic job thus far!

I want to take this opportunity to let you know a bit about the exercise/body related changes you are might experience over the next two to three months. Also, to remind you of symptoms you may get during exercises as the weight of your baby places more strain on



your body. This information is not intended to scare you, but prepare you and cue you to watch out for symptoms that might require modification of exercises.

Of utmost importance as you head into these last few weeks of pregnancy is that we continue to **temporarily** modify your exercise as guided by these trimester three exercise programs to ensure you don't push your body beyond the capacity and currently capabilities of your abdominal wall and pelvic floor. By following these guidelines you will give your body a better chance of fully rehabilitating and recovering without long term injuries or dysfunctions.

Yes D-day is rapidly approaching and maybe not fast enough for some of you, this is a time where you should be nurturing your body, choose exercises and movements that help you feel good and don't place your body under too much stress whether it be here with your exercise program, or with the rest of your life as you finalise plans for maternity leave, social engagements, birth prep and prepping for life with your new baby. You should not feel wiped out from these exercise programs, you should feel energised afterwards, in saying that, I do recommend you take a wee rest after a program, don't go filling up the next few hours with errands etc. If you do find you are feeling wiped out after your sessions, consider modifying them to a lower intensity to help you feel energised instead.

The overall goals of exercise in the third trimester are:

- Maintain a comfortable level of activity
- Reduce discomfort related to body changes – strength training will help with this
- Prepare for birth with focused birth prep exercises
- Minimise peaking or doming down the centre of your abdomen from too much pressure during exercises – I will cue you to watch for this in the videos
- Minimise downward pressure on your pelvic floor

Your body will continue to rapidly change at its greatest rate this trimester and that is no easy feat, remember that!! Just a reminder that weight gain is part of healthy pregnancy, this will obviously come with its fair share of aches, pains and discomforts. So, look after yourself, take it easy on yourself and 'listen to your body' – more on that below.

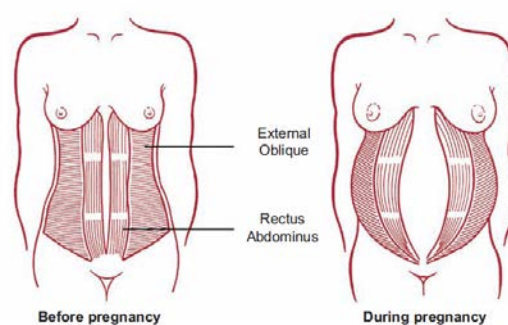
It is possible **fatigue** will return, on top of lack of sleep from not being able to get comfortable at night and/or having to get up to wee, again modify your workouts to be achievable for your level of energy.

Of course there can be a lot of **mixed emotions** at this time, and all of them are pretty common, so don't doubt yourself. This program is here to support you, so 'listen to your body', remember to do what is comfortable for your body, if something hurts, don't push through the pain, if you are having increasing pressure in your vagina or peeing your pants with exercises, reduce the range of movement and/or the weight/resistance and last but not least, watch out for any peaking or doming down the centre of your belly above and below your belly button, if you see that, modify or omit offending exercises.

It is ok to start to **tone down the intensity** of your sessions and reduce the resistance/weights, your body is already working extremely hard nurturing your body and baby.

The **change in the size of your baby bump** during these next few weeks will likely be the biggest hurdle you encounter in relation to your exercise programs. Your range of motion and mobility will likely continue to reduce and I have considered this with programming and of course these exercises are tried and tested on previously pregnant ladies too, so rest assured they are all appropriate for these stages of your pregnancy. However with that said, everyone has a different experience and different abilities so not all exercises will suit everyone hence why there is a variety to choose from.

The changes to your abdomen occurring to allow for your growing baby include stretching and lengthening of your abdominal muscles which means they have reduced ability to generate force, hence why it is common to need to reduce the weights you might be lifting as your belly expands. However much of the change occurs at the linea alba, the connective tissue down the centre connecting your two muscle bellies



together, it stretches apart, thins and therefore has reduced ability to generate force and strength, so this is why we watch out for the peaking/doming down the centre as this is one of the weak points where increased pressure likes to try to escape – remember this is normal in up to 100% of pregnancies we just don't want to make it bigger than needed by placing too much extra pressure on it with inappropriate exercises.

You may experience **Braxton-hicks contractions** ‘practise contractions’ – these may occur during your exercise sessions and are characterised as (usually) painless tightening’s of your abdomen where it feels rock hard for a short period. Sometimes they might be strong enough you need to stop what you are doing until it softens again, continue if you feel comfortable to do so.

Likewise with the movements of your baby, these will be getting stronger now, and sometimes might be strong or uncomfortable enough causing you to need to pause your workout for a minute or two – continue on if and once you feel ready again. This is normal and not a reason for concern.

**Pelvic or groin pain** can be an unpleasant symptom as your muscles, ligaments and uterus expand to accommodate your growing baby. With some positions and movement you might feel sudden sharp, stabbing or shooting pains around the pelvis area. This might be caused by your baby pushing on a nerve, pause and move into a comfortable position while it subsides. Consider whether the exercise is appropriate to retry and watch out for more information and modifications in the videos to modify the exercises which can be considered potentially more aggravating if you are tending to suffer from this.

Your **postural balance** is challenged to varying degrees throughout your pregnancy, so please consider this with the exercises you are doing, have something such as a chair, bench or wall nearby that you can use for balance if needed. You are at higher risk of falling with your centre of gravity altered, if you do have fall, please get checked by your healthcare professional.

**Lying flat on your back**, this in general is not recommended for extended periods of time which is why you will not see many exercises in this position. Symptoms you may experience lying flat on your back and should be an indication that you should roll onto your side are dizziness, tingling in your legs, breathlessness, nausea or general discomfort. If you do feel ok lying on your back and don’t get any adverse symptoms it is considered safe for you to do so.

As your baby and belly continue to expand your **pelvic floor** will have extra pressure placed on it from your babies weight. It is reasonable to reduce an extra pressure placed on your pelvic floor by reducing exercises that precipitate this. Typical culprits include impact exercise such as running and jumping which is why there is no impact work at all in the third trimester programs. If you experience increased heaviness, pain or leaking from particular exercises please consider modifying them by reducing range of motion, depth or weight used with offending exercises or leave them out completely.

**Wrist pain**, with tingling and numbness in hands can occur usually from carpal tunnel syndrome from increased fluid compressing your median nerve in your wrist. Please see the extra resource about modifying your exercises on the home page for more information.

Concerning symptoms where you should stop exercising and consult with your healthcare provider are:

- Significant increase in swelling (fluid build-up commonly happens in the third trimester in hand, feet and face), however if you notice a significant increase please call your healthcare provider to discuss this.
- Chestpain
- Excessive shortness of breath
- Painful uterine contractions (more than 6-8/hour)
- Vaginal bleeding or any 'gush' of fluid from your vagina (suggestive of rupture of membranes)