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Pregnancy, Posture & Fitness

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Every pregnant woman wants to bring a healthy and vibrant child into this world. Making healthy choices during pregnancy is a critical component to handling the physical, mental and emotional demands of pregnancy while ensuring a safe birth and long, vitalistic life for both you and your baby.

Women's bodies were innately designed to give birth. When pregnant the hormone Relaxin is produced to relax the muscles, ligaments and tendons to accommodate for the growing baby. As a woman approaches the end of the first trimester, increased weight in the belly creates a pelvic tilt forward creating a more exaggerated curve in the lumbar spine. Oxytocin, another hormone, helps create effective contractions while simultaneously acting as the body's natural pain reliever and preventing bleeding after labor. These changes create more space, protection and stability for the growing baby.

A fitness regimen throughout the pregnancy and post-partum period supports the desire for an uncomplicated pregnancy and birth. Unfortunately, recent research shows that only 1 out of every 6 pregnant women exercise a light to moderate intensity most days of the week (Fieril).

As a mother's weight increases, her center of gravity shifts outward and postural changes such as instability in the spine and pelvis occur (Ohm). Some of the instability in the spine and pelvis comes from a weakened pelvic floor and core thus creating less intra-abdominal pressure.

Fortunately, poor posture has been perceived as being improved through fitness and chiropractic care during pregnancy (Fieril). One study revealed that urinary incontinence as a result of weakened pelvic floor is a common condition in pregnancy and in the post-partum period. Chiropractic care has been shown to effectively improve the muscular tone and restoration of the articular function twice as much as no care at all (Roy).

Staying active while pregnant has been reported and described by women as "enjoying using their muscles during exercise" which leads to a "psychological boost". Chiropractic care at the core of a healthy lifestyle, in conjunction with physical fitness during pregnancy, helps mom achieve optimal health and peak performance so that her body can better adapt to the demands of the birth process. A healthy nervous system ensures a healthier growing baby during pregnancy, a safer pregnancy for mom and full life expression for both today and throughout a lifetime.

Pregnancy is an empowering and natural experience that should be looked upon as something other than a disorder to be monitored. Do you have questions on where to start for your fitness routine during pregnancy? Ask your 100 Year Lifestyle chiropractor today to learn how to keep your spine and nervous system healthy throughout pregnancy. Lifestyle chiropractic care along with physical activity during pregnancy prepares mom for the endurance, strength and structure needed during labor and birth.

Take charge of your body and the decisions made prenatal, perinatal and post-partum to support *you and your newborn's* 100 Year Lifestyle.

Fieril KP., Olsen MF., Glantz A., Larsson M. Experiences of Exercise During Pregnancy Among Women Who Perform Regular Resistance Training: A Qualitative Study. *Phys Ther* 2014; 94 (8): 1135-1143. doi: 10.2522/ptj.20120432

Roy, AM. Pelvic muscle floor training in a case of postpartum urinary incontinence. *JCCP*. 13; 2, 1017-124. December 2012. http://jccponline.com/jccp_v13_n2.pdf

Ohm, J. Chiropractic care for an easier pregnancy and safer birth. *Pathways to Family Wellness* magazine, Dec. 1st, #24 <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/chiropractic-care-for-an-easier-pregnancy-and-safer-birth.html>

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