

# SCREENING TOOL

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY



Name .....

Address .....

Phone ..... Birthdate / /

Current Health Professional ..... Contact .....

Current Gestational Age (weeks) ..... Due Date .....

### STAGE 1 - GENERAL CONTRAINDICATIONS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

*This section explores general health prior to pregnancy*

1. Has your medical practitioner ever told you that you have a heart condition or have you ever suffered a stroke?	YES	NO
2. Do you ever experience unexplained pains or discomfort in your chest at rest or during physical activity/exercise?	YES	NO
3. Do you ever feel faint, dizzy or lose balance during physical activity/exercise?	YES	NO
4. Have you had an asthma attack requiring immediate medical attention at any time over the last 12 months?	YES	NO
5. If you have diabetes (type 1 or type 2) have you had trouble controlling your blood sugar (glucose) in the last 3 months?	YES	NO
6. Do you have any diagnosed muscle, bone or joint problems that you have been told could be made worse by participating in physical activity/exercise?	YES	NO
7. Do you have any other conditions that may require special consideration for you to exercise?	YES	NO

IF YOU ANSWERED **YES** to any of the 7 questions above, you should seek guidance from a health professional before participating in any further physical activity/exercise.

IF YOU ANSWERED **NO** to all 7 questions above, please proceed to STAGE 2, which specifically considers your health during pregnancy.

This screening tool is to be used in conjunction with the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines for Pregnant Women <https://www1.health.gov.au/>  
Pregnant women should discuss their physical activity / exercise behaviours with an appropriately qualified health professional as this tool does not constitute nor replace medical advice. No responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted by Exercise & Sport Science Australia, Fitness Australia, Sports Medicine Australia or Exercise is Medicine for any loss, damage, or injury that may arise from any person acting on any statement or information contained in this document. While care has been taken to ensure the information contained in the material is accurate at the date of publication, the organisations do not warrant its accuracy. If you intend to take any action or inaction based on this form, it is recommended that you obtain your own professional advice based on your specific circumstances.

# STAGE 2 - CONTRAINDICATIONS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY

## ABSOLUTE CONTRAINDICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY

*Have you ever been told that you have any of the following contraindications to physical activity/exercise:*

1. Incompetent cervix	YES	NO
2. Ruptured membranes, premature labour	YES	NO
3. Persistent second or third trimester bleeding	YES	NO
4. Placenta previa	YES	NO
5. Pre-eclampsia	YES	NO
6. Evidence of intrauterine growth restriction	YES	NO
7. Multiple gestation (eg: triplets or higher number)	YES	NO
8. Poorly controlled Type I diabetes, hypertension or thyroid disease	YES	NO
9. Other serious cardiovascular, respiratory or systemic disorder	YES	NO

IF YOU ANSWERED **YES** to any of the 9 questions above, you should discuss opportunities to modify your physical activity/exercise with a health professional before participating in any further physical activity/exercise. It is still important that you avoid sitting for long periods of time.

IF YOU ANSWERED **NO** to all 9 questions above, please proceed to RELATIVE CONTRAINDICATIONS.

## RELATIVE CONTRAINDICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY

*Have you ever been told that you have any of the following contraindications to physical activity/exercise:*

1. History of spontaneous miscarriage, premature labour or fetal growth restriction	YES	NO
2. Mild/moderate cardiovascular or chronic respiratory disease	YES	NO
3. Pregnancy-induced hypertension	YES	NO
4. Poorly controlled seizure disorder	YES	NO
5. Type 1 diabetes	YES	NO
6. Symptomatic anaemia	YES	NO
7. Malnutrition, significantly underweight or eating disorder	YES	NO
8. Twin pregnancy after the 28th week	YES	NO
9. Other significant medical condition/s (Please detail below)	YES	NO

IF YOU ANSWERED **YES** to any of the 9 questions above, you should discuss opportunities to modify your physical activity/exercise with a health professional before participating in any further physical activity/exercise. It is still important that you move about frequently and avoid sitting for long periods of time.

IF YOU ANSWERED **NO** to all 9 questions above, please follow the physical activity/exercise guidelines on the next page.

**IMPORTANT:** Where physical activity/exercise is safe, health professionals should encourage physical activity/exercise in accordance with the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines for Pregnant women, with the key messages being **Move more - Sit less - Be active during pregnancy!**

# STAGE 3 - PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/EXERCISE GUIDELINES

## DOSE: HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SHOULD I DO?

IF YOU ARE:	SEDENTARY	ACTIVE BUT NOT MEETING GUIDELINES	MEETING GUIDELINES BETWEEN 150-300 MINS PER WEEK	EXCEEDING GUIDELINES
	<p>Doing any physical activity is better than doing none</p> <p>If you currently do no physical activity, start slowly and progress towards meeting the guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be active on most, preferably all, days every week</li> <li>• Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes (2 ½ to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes (1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities, each week</li> <li>• Do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week targeting large muscle groups</li> <li>• Minimise the amount of time spent in prolonged sitting</li> <li>• Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper intensity limit for exercise during pregnancy is not known</li> <li>• To ensure safety and wellbeing, highly active women, including athletes, should have their physical/activity program overseen and managed by an informed health professional</li> <li>• May continue with current program, as long as necessary modifications are made as the pregnancy progresses</li> </ul>

## TYPE: WHAT SORT OF ACTIVITY SHOULD I DO / NOT DO?

### Physical activities/exercises that are considered SAFE:

National guidelines concur that the following activities are considered to be generally safe for pregnant women with an uncomplicated pregnancy:

- Aerobic physical activity/exercise
- Muscle strengthening exercises using body weight, weights or resistance bands
- Pelvic floor muscle exercises
- Pregnancy specific classes

### Physical activities/exercises that are considered UNSAFE:

Pregnant women are advised to avoid activities that involve:

- Significant changes in pressure (eg. sky diving, scuba diving etc.)
- Risk of contact / collision
- Risk of falling (ie. activities that require high levels of balance, coordination and agility)
- Heavy lifting

Women who are healthy and already active do not need to seek medical clearance for physical activity / exercise during pregnancy, but those who are considering high volumes of exercise training (high intensity, prolonged duration, heavy weights, etc) should seek advice and guidance from a health professional who is knowledgeable about the effects of high level training on maternal and fetal outcomes.

## INTENSITY: HOW HARD SHOULD I EXERCISE?

### Rating of Perceived Exertion for Physical Activities

- Current PA guidelines recommend both moderate and vigorous intensity activities
- Use this RPE scale to judge the intensity of activities
- On this scale, where 1 is sedentary (not moving), and 10 is maximal effort, activities in the range 3-7 are considered safe and are recommended for health benefits in pregnant women
- Intensity may also be judged using the 'talk test'; in moderate intensity activities women should be able to carry on a conversation, while in vigorous activities they would find this difficult

- 1 Sedentary
- 2 Light
- 3 Moderate
- 4
- 5
- 6 Vigorous
- 7
- 8 High Intensity
- 9
- 10

## REASONS TO STOP EXERCISE AND CONSULT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- Chest pain
- Persistent excessive shortness of breath - that does not resolve with rest
- Severe headache
- Persistent dizziness/feeling faint - that does not resolve with rest
- Regular painful uterine contractions
- Vaginal bleeding
- Persistent loss of fluid from the vagina - indicating possible ruptured membrane

## ADDITIONAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS - WHAT TO AVOID?

- Avoid dehydration and inadequate nutrition. Stay well hydrated and try to ensure energy intake is in line with recommended gestational weight gain
- Avoid heat stress/hyperthermia in the first trimester. Adjust physical activity / exercise in excessively hot weather, especially when there is high humidity
- Avoid long periods of motionless posture (standing still, or lying in a supine position), especially if this causes light headedness or dizziness
- Avoid physical activity/exercise at high altitude (above 2000m) unless acclimatised and trained to do this prior to pregnancy
- Always wear appropriate shoes for the activity, non-restrictive clothing and a supportive bra