

# TRAINING TIP OF THE WEEK

## EXERCISING DURING PREGNANCY

In the absence of complications, pregnant women should follow the CDC's recommendation of moderate exercise for 30 minutes or more on most days of the week. The goal of training during pregnancy is to maintain fitness while avoiding fetal distress. One challenge is adapting to the body's physiologic changes with pregnancy. Increased oxygen consumption of pregnancy leads to a decline in exercise tolerance so pregnant athletes should stop exercising when they feel fatigued. Concerning nutrition, an additional 300 calories need to be consumed daily; however, the adequacy of an athlete's dietary intake is ultimately determined by appropriate weight gain during pregnancy. The highest risk to mother and fetus with exercise is trauma, and this can be minimized by avoiding training environments with a high risk of falling, especially as the woman's balance changes during pregnancy. A few examples include discontinuing cycling outdoors and running in slippery conditions or on uneven terrain after the first trimester. As weight increases, changes in the pregnant woman's center of gravity and curvature of the lower spine lead to more discomfort in later pregnancy so swimming and other water-based exercises, such as aqua-jogging, can help an athlete



maintain aerobic fitness in a no-impact environment until she is ready to resume normal activity after delivery. There is no evidence that training has detrimental effects on labor or fetal growth, and babies born to exercising moms even have lower body fat at birth and at five years of age compared to babies born to non-exercising mothers.

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