



Tips for an Injury-Free Pregnancy

During your pregnancy your body will change and your posture will adapt in response to this. Your abdominal muscles will stretch and will be less able to protect your spine and pelvis. Your ligaments will soften and lengthen under the effect of hormones. Your pelvis may become unstable. Your pelvic floor will weaken under the increasing weight of your baby, the influence of hormones, and a possible change in bowel habits. You should take extra care to protect yourself from pain or injury during this time.

Take Care of Your Back

To prevent or reduce pain and injury, postural awareness and looking after your back and pelvis are very important.

- Stand or sit tall. Imagine a string attached to the top of your head pulling upwards, gently lengthening your spine.
- Don't let your chin poke out.
- Avoid slouching.
- Keep your lower back in a neutral position. Try not to flatten or exaggerate the natural curve.

Take care of your pelvis

- Keep your body symmetrical when possible.
- Try to avoid standing on one leg for extended periods of time.
- Avoid crossing your legs when sitting.

Standing

Share your weight evenly between your feet. Keep your toes pointed forward e.g. when washing dishes or driving a car. Try to stand and walk tall. Where possible, keep your shoulders back, tummy in, and bottom under. Use your muscles to hold you up!

Sitting

Share your weight evenly between your sit bones, don't slouch and keep your bottom tucked well back in the chair. Use adequate lumbar support, especially if sitting for long periods (a rolled up towel will do). Avoid crossing your legs.

Sleeping

You will spend most of your later pregnancy sleeping on your side. When lying on your side, keep a pillow between your legs, even when turning over in bed. Sleeping often becomes increasingly uncomfortable toward the end of your pregnancy. You may want to use extra pillows to support around your belly and upper body.

Getting out of bed

Bend your knees and roll to one side, then use your lower elbow and hand to push yourself up into sitting position as you lower your legs over the edge of the bed.



Bending

Kneel or squat for low-level jobs. Avoid stooping over low surfaces especially for long periods. Avoid bending and twisting your back.

Minimise Lifting

Try to avoid lifting anything heavy. If you already have one or more young children, assist them to do as much for themselves as they can. Encourage them to climb into their own car seat, up onto chairs and into bed.

Lifting and carrying

If you must lift, then try to lift with good technique. Make a habit of doing this to reduce strain on your back and as a bonus you will get strong and toned thighs!

- Activate your core and pelvic floor first.
- Bend from your hips and knees, not your waist.
- Keep your back straight.
- Maintain a neutral spine.
- Keep the load small and close to your body.
- Try to carry the load centrally.
- Avoid bending and twisting your back while carrying.

