

PRECAUTIONS FOR PREGNANCY YOGA

- Listen carefully to your body. If you feel any discomfort, stop. You will probably need to modify each pose to your body's physical changes.
- When practicing twisting poses, twist more from the shoulders and back to avoid putting any pressure on your abdomen. Closed twists should be avoided.
- Avoid poses that stretch the muscles too much, particularly the abdominal muscles.
- Remember that you are more prone to strain muscles now because the pregnancy hormone relaxin, which allows the uterus to expand, also acts on all connective tissue.
- As a precautionary measure, practice standing and balance poses near a wall for safety reasons, to avoid losing your balance and risking injury.
- Maintain as much length as possible between the breastbone and the pubic bone to make breathing easier.
- Keep the pelvis upright when stretching the chest and the front of the thighs.
- Avoid inverted postures
- Don't lie on your front-apart from in child's pose.
- Women who have conceived later in life or have had a difficult or assisted conception, or those have a history of complications during a *previous pregnancy*, should be careful, particularly during the first trimester. The yoga that is performed during this period should be very gentle and should avoid poses that are challenging such as those that require double leg lifts. The focus should be mainly on relaxing and *soothing stretches*.
- During the last trimester, extreme backbends and low forward stretches are to be avoided.

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- Many experts advise that no exercise that requires breath retention should be done during yoga for pregnancy.
- Though it can be very beneficial to perform focused inhalations and exhalations, because this can help greatly at the time of the delivery, hyperventilation should be avoided.
- Poses and exercises that involve squats can be very beneficial because they help to stretch and exercise the pelvic muscles and which can be very helpful at the time of delivery. Deep unsupported squats should be avoided in the third trimester (from 32 weeks in first time mother, from 34 weeks in subsequent pregnancies).
- Above all, listen to your body when it comes to yoga during pregnancy. If something feels uncomfortable, if there is pain, or if it just doesn't feel right, for some reason, don't do it.
- Don't jump from pose to pose. Take your time!!
- Don't over stretch or strain, hold poses for less than five breaths each time.
- Don't hold the breath or practice any vigorous pumping breaths.
- Don't lie on your back after 30 weeks.
- Don't lie on your back with legs straight from 16 weeks onwards
- No closed twists
- Don't maintain a lifted mulabandha for longer than a single breath.
- Note: Please seek advice from your doctor or midwife if you have any complications.