



Pregnancy Active Movement Sessions in Water

Benefits of participating in a PrAMS Programme:

- Having fun
- Feeling weightless
- Meeting other expectant women
- Feeling relaxed
- Health benefits for you and baby
- Did I mention FUN?...

AND Studies have shown that the benefits of being active during pregnancy can include:

- Reduced labour time
- Reduced recovery time post partum
- Assist with weight management post partum
- And a healthier feeling pregnancy

Make sure you are ready to exercise: When you are pregnant and considering exercising, always check with your doctor first. If you have any of the following conditions you may need to take special care.

- Heart Problems
- Asthma or Chronic Lung Problems
- High Blood Pressure
- Extreme weight problems (Under or Over)
- Muscle or Joint Problems
- History of premature labor
- History of several miscarriages
- Multiple Pregnancy
- History of Incompetent Cervix
- Persistent Bleeding
- Placental Problems (Previa, etc.)

What is your current level of fitness?

One of the things that you need to determine before you get started is where you are fitness wise. If you have previously been a couch potato this is not the time to take up most sports. If you have been very active before and are participating in an exercise that is safe for pregnancy or can be modified for pregnancy, generally you can continue to participate. However, most women are not able to maintain the same pace that they did before the pregnancy, so keep that in mind.

There are several exercises that you can do in water while pregnant, even if you were previously sedentary. These would generally be: walking, aqua-jogging, swimming, and specialized pregnancy aerobics. The key, as with any exercise in pregnancy, is to take it relatively easy and to **listen to your body**.

Planning to get active

Exercise is of benefit to everyone- Pregnant Women are no exception. So, now that you've decided to exercise, what comes next?

1. First of all you want to exercise on a regular basis. This is what will give you the most benefit. When you exercise you need to make sure that you warm up and cool down, have plenty of water available, and are cleared by your care provider.
2. Exercise with a friend this will make the experience even more enjoyable but also help with ongoing motivation.
3. Spending time in the water can be very enjoyable while you are pregnant; your joints are given a rest as the water takes some of the 'weight' of your growing baby.
4. Exercising within your normal scope is also generally recommended during pregnancy, eating well and keeping mobile can help with the birthing process, as well as aid recovery from the birth.
5. Whether you consider yourself a 'water baby' or not, spending time in the water while you are pregnant and developing a relaxed relationship with water will help you to be relaxed with your baby around the water once you meet him, or her!



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Preparation for PrAMS in Water

Spending time in the water can be very enjoyable while you are pregnant, your joints are given a rest as the water takes some of the 'weight' of your growing baby

What to wear at the pool?

You can purchase purpose-made swim suits (with expanding tummies), however, you may find, sports briefs and a sports Bra are more versatile as there is no material to stretch over your bump. If you'd prefer to be more 'covered-up' try the sports Bra and briefs with a rash vest which you can use after baby arrives for covering up in the sun. The material is very stretchy and will grow with you and baby! Bike shorts may be added for the more modest. If you are large breasted, consider wearing a maternity/nursing bra under a sports bra for added support. Whatever you wear, the pool management will require it to be clean and not too long or baggy which may restrict your movement.

Know your limits

Now that you're committed to regular exercise, what are your limitations during pregnancy? Again, you should discuss this with your practitioner, they can give you information specific to your pregnancy. You should strive for the following:

Take care of your balance: After the fourth month your center of gravity and buoyancy change and you can quickly find yourself off balance. Although your baby is very well protected by the amniotic sac should a fall occur, the best protection is prevention! Take special care getting into and out of the pool the pool floor may be slippery and combined with your new centre of buoyancy this can sweep you off your feet. As you exit, use a ladder and hold on tightly or walk up the ramp and hold the hand rail. The water supports your newly increasing weight, and as you exit it can feel like gravity is being very unfair, you may also feel a little light headed as the water pressure on your body is released and blood flow to your brain is reduced.

No bouncing or jerking: Bouncing exercises are not great for your joints or bones at any point, but especially during pregnancy. Your body produces a hormone called relaxin that actually softens the ligaments allowing your bones to spread for the birth of your baby. This is a great thing, although it does predispose you for a higher risk of injury when doing bouncing or jerking motions. Be careful walking in shallow water (below your belly button) as your weight is not being supported but the water resistance is high if you are moving about.

Find a suitable space to exercise in: Avoid the risk of direct blows to the abdomen by swimming at times when the lanes at the pool are not crowded.

Don't over do it: This includes overheating. Raising your core temperature too much can affect the baby adversely. Always drink water before, during and after exercising. Listening to your body when something hurts or doesn't feel right, that means stop!

Stop Signs:

- Dizziness
- Faintness
- Headaches
- Shortness of Breath
- Uterine contractions
- Vaginal Bleeding or fluid leaking
- Heart Palpitations

Heart rates: Generally women should keep their heart rate under 130 beats per minute. However, for some women this may be too high. So, the easiest way to do this is what is called the talk test. Simply put, if you are too winded while exercising to carry on a conversation, you are doing too much.

When Can I start back after my birth?

Generally this will be about four to six weeks postpartum for a vaginal birth and six to eight weeks for a surgical birth. Again, talk to your practitioner about returning to exercise. There are also special exercises, like kegeling pelvic floor exercises, that can be started immediately after the birth. Exercise should make you feel better during pregnancy (and life!). Being in the water should be relaxing, stimulating and enjoyable.

What if I am fearful of water?

If you are afraid in the water, you should approach a swimming instructor for confidence lessons. Your fear of water will easily be transferred to your new baby so now is a good time to be motivated to face this challenge. A swimming teacher will take you through some breathing exercises, teach you relaxed floating and submerging activities at your own pace so you won't feel rushed or threatened. Go to a class with a friend learning to be confident in the water will change your life and your baby's!

**Contact Wakatipu Swim School for next available session
0274511161 or register online at wakatipuswimschool.co.nz**

**building aquatic life skills
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