



### Pre / Postnatal Pregnancy Studio Policy

Exercise is an integral part of a healthy lifestyle. It helps prevent disease, is important for healthy bones and can help reduce stress, manage fatigue and lead to a better overall quality of life. All of which are very important when there is a newborn to care for.

Pregnancy and childbirth have a major impact on a woman's body, both internally and externally. During pregnancy, every system is affected, including respiratory, cardiac/circulatory, hormonal, biomechanical and musculoskeletal. This can lead to shortness of breath, tiredness, swelling, varicose veins, postural changes and issues such as lower back pain, pelvic joint pain, carpal tunnel symptoms, rectus diastasis (separation of the abdominal muscles) and urinary incontinence. Having said that; prenatal pilates, when done correctly can really help out the mum-to-be!

#### **PRENATAL EXERCISE**

It's fantastic that you're considering AWPilates at this time in your life, as the benefits of a well-structured exercise program during pregnancy can be beneficial for both mums and bubs. However, it's no secret that we like to do things a little different and our high intensity classes are of a special variety.

If you are new to AWPilates you CAN start training with the right instruction, modification and support throughout your pregnancy.

If there is pain or discomfort, ease off! Exercise during pregnancy should not be about improving muscle tone. It should be about maintaining health, posture and a positive mental attitude.

#### **Up to 15 weeks:**

- Have your Obstetrician fill out the Pregnancy Authorisation to Exercise Form and return to us upon arrival to your first class.
- You may continue group classes up to the 15th week, if/when you are beyond 15 weeks, see below.
- Before booking your first group class, please contact Anne at 0409 039 703 (if you have not already spoken) to be sure you are booking into the best classes to support your body!
- Please ensure the instructors are informed what week you are up to at the beginning of each class, as modifications of certain exercises will need to be given.

NOTES: This initial stage of pregnancy is where there is the most risk of miscarriage. We need to remember:

- Intensity needs to be lighter to avoid the body temperature and heart rate elevating too high
- The amount of "sit up" abdominal exercises need to be reduced. Instead, we focus on T-zone activation and the pelvic floor muscles.

### **Beyond 15 weeks:**

- You can attend our group classes after you are 15 weeks along DEPENDING if you have been attending prior to pregnancy, if you have approval from your OBGYN/GP.
- You can continue with a reformer pilates pre/post-natal class or a barre pre/post-natal class (subject to availability). Both of these classes have been designed for those of you expecting right up until birth. They combine strength training, light cardio and gentle stretching appropriate for your body during pregnancy.
- If preferred, Private one on one reformer pilates or barre sessions are also available with our pre/post-natal trained Instructors. These sessions are individually tailored to your changing needs at each stage of your pregnancy.
- Please have your Obstetrician fill out the Pregnancy Authorisation to Exercise Form and return to us upon arrival to your first class.

Things to remember about our 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester:

#### **1. Modifying all abdominal work; and no more supine work.**

During pregnancy, we want to avoid over strengthening the abdominals or increasing their intra-abdominal pressure. As the belly gets bigger, we don't want the rectus to be tighter as it will stretch and can cause a rectus diastasis, it also becomes increasingly more uncomfortable for the mother-to-be. Supine positions are avoided at this stage as many women feel nauseous or dizzy lying in this position. This is because the baby can sit right on top of the main blood vessels as they exit the spine and cause less blood to pump through. This can not only make the mother feel dizzy, but can also be dangerous as less oxygen is passed to the baby.

#### **2. Avoid inner thigh work**

We want to avoid inner thigh work because your adductors attach to your pubic symphysis (your pubic bone). When someone is in the advanced stages of pregnancy, their ligaments and joints increase in laxity; which can cause a shearing pain in the pelvic; additionally; some women experience some groin pain as the pubic bone starts to separate. Working the inner thighs when the pubic symphysis is already unstable can cause the pubic bone to separate even more. For the same reason; we avoid single leg work including 'bird-dogs'.

### 3. Avoid prone positions (lying on the stomach)

At this stage of pregnancy, lying on the stomach becomes very uncomfortable as the baby is showing.

#### General exercise tips during pregnancy:

- Pelvic floor exercises are very beneficial, but it is just as important to practice releasing/relaxing the pelvic floor as it is to contract it (vary the range of contractions, 100%, 50%, 25% etc. up and down).
- Avoid exercise in a warm/hot environment as core body temperature increases when pregnant.
- Keep well hydrated and avoid exercising on an empty stomach (your glycogen levels may drop too low). Bring a water bottle to class/exercise.
- Wear a supportive bra.
- Avoid ballistic (bouncing) stretching. Your joints are more flexible through elevated levels of the hormone relaxin.
- Avoid holding prolonged positions, as this may increase blood pressure.

#### For all pregnant members, extra guidance and or doctor advice should be sought if you have:

- Diabetes before or during the pregnancy
- High blood pressure or thyroid disease
- Anaemia or blood disorders
- Any cardiac or pulmonary disorders
- A history of premature labour
- Placenta previa where your placenta has implanted completely over, or near your cervix
- Experience three or more miscarriages
- Experienced cramping, spotting or bleeding during pregnancy
- Been told you're expecting more than one baby.

#### Things to Remember:

- Always remind the instructor you are pregnant before EVERY class.
- You must avoid abdominal curls (flexing your upper body). This can make your abdominals separate further than they should. As you progress into your 2nd trimester, your abdominals separate naturally.
- Keep your spine mobile.
- Do not over-stretch. The hormone relaxin is released during pregnancy. This can make your joints more flexible (especially applicable to women who are already very flexible).
- Avoid squeezing hard on fitness circles. These can create too much pressure on your pelvis. Slow controlled shallow pulses are best.

- Avoid painful movements and positions. If you are feeling pain in your tailbone, or feel pubic pain, stop exercising immediately.
- Listen to your body! If you feel dizzy, nauseous, experience numbness, pins and needles or if it doesn't feel right in any other way, please stop!
- Avoid static (held) positions for long periods. This may increase blood pressure, so keep moving.
- Adhere to the five-minute rule. Never spend more than five minutes lying on your back at any one time, particularly in the second and third trimester. Roll onto your left side when laying down and coming up.
- Check alignment. Neutral pelvic position will constantly be changing throughout your pregnancy so constantly check your alignment and adjust accordingly.

We look forward to working with you!! If you are interested in joining us, please complete the following medical waiver and have your GP/OBGYN/Midwife provide a signature. In some circumstances we can accept a Women's Specialist Physiotherapy signature.

Anne & The Team

AWPilates & Wellness