

Taking care of back & pelvis in pregnancy

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Avoid heavy lifting

If you have to lift or carry anything, hold it close to your body. Bend your knees, not your back, and try not to twist.

When shopping, carry a bag in each hand. Or use a rucksack or a backpack, which helps back muscles to work better. It's best not to carry objects that weigh more than 10 or 11kgs when you're expecting.

Exercise regularly

The best forms of pregnancy exercise include:

- swimming
- walking
- cycling on an exercise bike
- exercising on a large gym ball
- yoga

Wear comfortable, supportive shoes

Just wear what feels best. If you are used to very high heels and swap to flats, you may feel uncomfortable at first. Your Achilles tendons, which run from the base of your calves to your heels, will soon adjust.

Improve your posture

Stand as if someone is making you taller by pulling a string attached to the top of your head. Tighten your pelvic floor muscles, and your tummy muscles will help to support your back.

Pelvic tilting can ease back strain caused by sitting or standing for long periods. When sitting, slowly work your pelvis back and forth rhythmically, without moving your shoulders, so your back becomes round, and then arched.

If you have pelvic pain, focus on the forward tilt, where you stick your chest and bottom out.

Don't put on too much weight

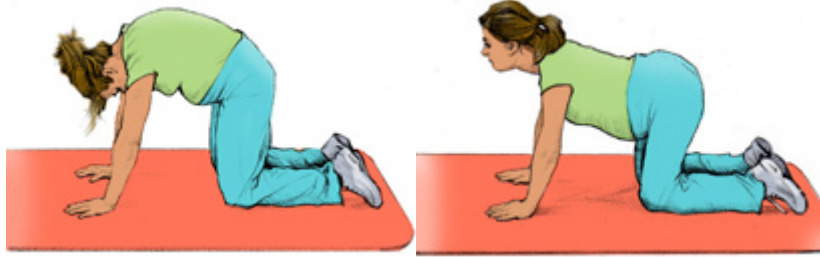
Having a high body mass index (BMI) makes you more likely to develop back and pelvic girdle pain during pregnancy. Though you shouldn't go on a diet in pregnancy, try to limit how much weight you gain.

Get into a good sitting position

Make sure that your back is well supported when you're sitting down. You could use a cushioned support (lumbar roll) that fits over the back of your chair. Ideally, your back should be slightly arched, with your breasts pointing straight ahead, rather than down towards your bump. Part your legs slightly, to allow for your bump.

Try getting on your hands and knees

Going on all fours can reduce the pressure on your back from the weight of your baby. Try getting into the following positions whenever you can:



The cat stretch: step 1

The cat stretch: step 2

Round your back into a hump shape, tucking in your tailbone (see step 1 above), and then gently arch your back in the opposite direction (step 2), so your bottom sticks out.

Adopt a good sleeping position

Once you reach 16 weeks of pregnancy, lying on your back when sleeping can make you [feel faint](#). That's because your baby is pressing on your blood vessels.

Try lying on your left, with your knees bent up, with two or more pillows placed between your knees. This keeps the pressure off the muscles around your hips and pelvis. Placing a wedge-shaped pillow under your bump can ease back pain.

This pamphlet is intended to provide you with general information. It does not substitute for doctor's advice and does not contain all known facts about pelvic floor exercises

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