

'I can' mentality goes long way after childbirth

May 22 2014



The way a woman feels about tackling everyday physical activities, including exercise, may be a predictor of how much weight she'll retain years after childbirth says a Michigan State University professor.

James Pivarnik, a professor of kinesiology and epidemiology at MSU, co-
led a study that followed 56 women during pregnancy and measured their [physical activity](#) levels, along with barriers to exercise and the ability to overcome them.

Six years later, the research team followed up with more than half of the participants and found that the women who considered themselves less able to take on these barriers had retained more of their [pregnancy weight](#). Top barriers identified in the study included time, motivation and childcare issues.

The research could help health professionals better understand what these real and perceived obstacles are and help women deal with [negative perceptions](#) while incorporating physical activity into their daily lives.

"The women who had difficulty believing they could overcome barriers that often occur in daily life or just thought they weren't cut out for physical activity overall retained 11 to 13 more pounds of pregnancy weight later on," Pivarnik said.

In contrast, the study revealed that those who showed higher levels of self-confidence had four to five times more physical activity during pregnancy and performed almost three times more activity six years later.

"We know that it's beneficial for a woman to be active in some way during and after pregnancy so she can regain her fitness and help with weight loss," Pivarnik said. "But what can affect this is whether [women](#) think they can or can't do it."

The study can be found in a recent print edition of the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* and was funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Provided by Michigan State University

Citation: 'I can' mentality goes long way after childbirth (2014, May 22) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-05-mentality-childbirth.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.