

The benefits of strength training during pregnancy

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For most healthy women, exercise during pregnancy is as important as it

is at all times of life. It brings benefits such as better overall health, preventing back pain and keeping you regular, which can be a challenge for some women.

While low-impact aerobic activities like walking are often emphasized, research has found a surprising benefit to working out in the weight room. It turns out that, beyond keeping muscles toned, strength training can ease the fatigue and [low energy](#) that affects so many [women](#) when they're expecting.

For a study published in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 26 women did six low- to moderate-intensity resistance exercises twice a week from week 23 to week 35 of their pregnancies.

Each session started with a five-minute warmup of walking on a treadmill followed by seated resistance machines—dual leg extensions, leg presses and leg curls, arm lat pulldowns and back extensions. Each exercise was done for two sets of 15 reps each at a controlled pace with a minute of rest between sets and two minutes of rest between machines. The participants also did two sets of a standing ab exercise using only their body weight.

The results were clear: Nearly all of the women felt more energized and less fatigued, both physically and mentally, starting after a single workout.

Strength training is safe for most [pregnant women](#), but the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends talking to your doctor before you start on any [exercise](#) program to make sure it's safe for you. Also, if you've never done any [strength training](#) before, work with a trainer who can create a program customized for you and your current abilities.

More information: The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has answers to common questions on [exercising during pregnancy](#).

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