

Abdominal Exercise During Pregnancy

The following exercises are designed to help you maintain your abdominal strength during pregnancy. You can do them on your bed or the floor. Remember to breathe in normally then do a kegel as you breathe out. Doing a kegel (pelvic floor contraction) will help you engage your abdominal core muscles (transverse abdominus). To contract your pelvic floor muscles tighten the muscles around the vagina and rectum as if to hold in urine and gas. Your abdomen will draw in if you are contracting the transverses abdominus muscle. (Imagine hugging your baby with your muscles.) Continue to breathe normally.

1) One leg heel slide: Lie on back with knees bent. Contract kegel and abdominal muscles as you slowly slide heel away from body and straighten leg. Relax. Contract muscles again as you slide heel back to start position. Begin with 10 on each side and work to 20-30. Avoid arching back and maintain a stable pelvis during exercise.

2) Single leg fall out: Lie on back with knees bent, hip width apart and feet flat on floor. Breathe in, as you breathe out do a pelvic floor contraction and let one leg fall out to the side but don't let your pelvis rotate or move. Relax. Do a pelvic floor contraction and bring leg back to starting position. Begin with 10 repetitions on each leg and work to 20. When you can do 20 with each leg begin to do both legs together. Start with 10 and work to 20.

3) On hands and knees: On your bed get into a hands and knees position so that you are square: hands under shoulders and knees below hips. Allow back to relax into normal curve. Breathe in and as you breathe out do a pelvic floor contraction and try to gently pull in abdominal muscles as if to hug your baby. Begin with 10 repetitions hold 5, work to 2 sets of 10 repetitions, hold 10.

If being on your back or hands and knees becomes uncomfortable for you, you can exercise your transverse abdominus muscles in side lying, sitting and standing. Do 10 repetitions of a pelvic floor contraction combined with drawing in your abdominals as if to hug your baby. Hold 5-10 counts in each position. Continue to breathe normally.

Please note if you should become short of breathe or dizzy while lying on your back please stop the exercise immediately and let your provider know about your symptoms.