

The Pilates Rx

For the Moms Trimester Trail Guide



Welcome

First off- congratulations on your pregnancy and welcome to Pilates RX For the Moms! This program centers around exercise programming to support prenatal and postnatal body changes and was built to help empower you through pregnancy and motherhood. You can feel comfortable knowing the program is guided by instructors who are both physical therapists as well as comprehensively certified Pilates trainers. Jessica used her own personal experience during pregnancy to help shape the program specifically to the needs of expectant and new mothers. Each trimester you can expect a newsletter to help support you in your current stage of pregnancy or new motherhood.

THE PILATES Rx

We started The Pilates RX "For the Moms" program to build overall confidence and empowerment throughout pregnancy, postpartum, and motherhood.

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First Trimester

Though it is considered safe to maintain your regular exercise routine during the first trimester, know that you may be feeling nauseous and fatigued and pregnancy is a time to be extra attentive to listening to your body. Finding out you are pregnant also comes with a flood of emotion. If you are feeling under the weather and finding it hard to exercise, this is a great time to focus your practice back to the basics and on breath work. Breath work benefits us mentally by alleviating stress, calming nerves, and deepening mind body connection. Being in tune with your breathing will help you release tension and take control of your labor and delivery experience.

For the Moms

Check out our "For the Moms" program! The first trimester is a great opportunity to come in for a baseline check-in. We will assess your posture, alignment, mobility, breath patterning, stability & strength, discuss your past medical history, and prioritize your specific goals into prenatal program design. The program also includes 3rd, and 4th (postnatal) check-ins as well as a pelvic health screen.

Useful info & advice

- If you are dealing with nausea try small frequent meals. It's counterintuitive but nausea increases on an empty stomach. Avoid foods or smells that trigger your nausea. Try ginger or lemon drop hard candies. Stay hydrated!. And ask your healthcare provider about taking an over the counter vitamin B6 supplement or unisom, or prescription for diclegis.
- Prenatal and iron supplements can cause constipation; constipation and straining can increase risk of prolapse. Make sure to hydrate, discuss the use of stool softener or magnesium with your health care provider.

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Second Trimester

Welcome to the second trimester... morning sickness and fatigue should be tapering, and this is generally when expectant mothers feel the most energetic!

But you may have a hard time adjusting to your growing belly. This is the time to learn strategies to manage pressure and helpful modifications before you need them. We can teach you how to monitor for pressure compensations like bearing down on your pelvic floor (feeling heaviness) or poofing out on your abdominals (seeing coning for doming). When you start feeling or seeing these compensations it is time to change your strategy or employ a modification to prevent issues like prolapse and diastasis recti over time. We're sure you have heard of kegels by now! We will go over the essential 3 steps: how to activate/squeeze your pelvic floor, lifting the pelvic floor muscles, and then completely relaxing the pelvic floor in your sessions. Core, pelvic floor, and joint stability exercises will be a major focus of your prenatal Pilates sessions in the second trimester. This stability focus can also be preventative for issues like symphysis pubis dysfunction and sacroiliac pain which can occur later in pregnancy.

This is also the time where you have to start to incorporate exercise position modifications. Avoid supine (flat on your back) exercise as your belly grows because the weight of your uterus in this position can compress the inferior vena cava and aorta causing decreased blood flow and dizziness. Avoid prone (lying on your belly) exercises when this position becomes uncomfortable. Instead try hands and knees, side lying, seated, and standing work, and utilize props as necessary. In the studio we will mix things up with props including the Pilates barrel, short box, and stability ball to name a few, and vary exercise position with use of the reformer, tower, chair, and barrel apparatus.



For the Moms

If you are enrolled in the For the Moms program your second trimester check-in will include re-assessment, posture training, modifications for sleeping positioning, core and pelvic floor stability and strength home program ideas. We will also review what to watch out for and strategies and modifications (including the use of props) to use as your pregnancy advances. As always, we will address any specific questions or concerns you may have.

Second trimester useful info & advice

- Relaxin is a hormone that helps “relax” muscles and loosen ligaments and joints to help create room for the growing baby and prepare for childbirth. Be aware that increased relaxin coupled with weight and center of gravity changes can contribute to your sense of alignment and balance feeling off, and sometimes even aches and pains or increased injury risk. Your prenatal pilates will focus on stability exercises to prevent and/or manage pain and reduce risk of injury. Stability exercises will be a key focus of your program.
- Round ligament pain can occur as baby and uterus grows and your ligaments get stretched and this pain is typically experienced starting in the second trimester. Addressing posture imbalances with Pilates can be helpful in managing this pain to help ease pressure on the pubic region and enhance pelvic stability to better distribute forces.
- Learn strategies and modifications to use for pressure management BEFORE you need them! Know what to be aware of: pressure compensations such as bearing down on pelvic floor (feelings of heaviness) or out on abdominals (seeing coning or doming).

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Third Trimester

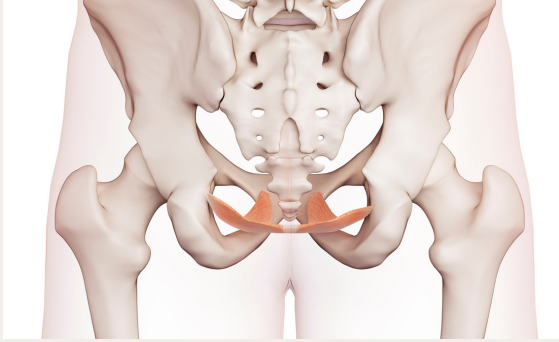
Congratulations you are in the home stretch! That second trimester energy burst may disappear, you may find yourself feeling more fatigued, or feeling increased pregnancy related aches and pains as your belly grows. Chest and back stretches to counteract pregnancy related posture changes will be a staple in your Pilates sessions. It's also time to transition from pelvic floor stability and strength focus to a relaxation focus, with sessions targeted at understanding how to relax your pelvic floor and time spent in positions and stretches that help relax and release the hips and pelvis in anticipation of labor and delivery. Sessions will also emphasize developing awareness of where you are holding tension and how to release tension (ie- releasing tension in jaw releases tension in the pelvic floor), as well as how to use your breath to manage pain. Pilates is a form of mindful movement. Jessica also highly recommends "Mindful Birthing, Training the Mind, Body, and Heart For Childbirth and Beyond" by Nancy Bardacke.

For the Moms

If you are enrolled in the For the Moms program your third trimester check in will include re-assessment, any further exercise modification, and a transition from pelvic floor strengthening to release and relaxation emphasis to prepare for labor and delivery. We will also incorporate specific stretches, a review of perineal massage to help prevent tearing, a review of the position options for laboring, as well as breathing strategies, the importance of movement and mindfulness strategies for birth.

Finally, we will start to think about & plan for early postpartum exercise programming.

Third trimester useful info & advice



- After 35 weeks focus on relaxing your pelvic floor. Try this: relax your body and close your eyes, focus on taking a big inhale through your nose for the count of 1-2-3-4 & imagine your breath expanding and opening your pelvic floor. Then exhale through your mouth as if you are blowing out birthday candles and focus on releasing your pelvic floor of any excess tension. Try this breathing in positions that help to open your hips and pelvis such as a deep squat or wide legged child's pose.

- Moving in labor is important to keep your pelvis open. A few options for positions to try include the "doula hula" aka slow dancing with your partner, bouncing on the birthing ball, placing the birthing ball at edge of bed & leaning over bed, or sitting backwards on toilet. After an epidural your options may be more limited but you can still try lying on your side or using the peanut ball in the hospital bed. Prepare with different options and use what works best for you!



- Pilates is mindful movement, but check out other mindfulness resources and try meditation! Meditation and relaxation take practice, the more relaxed you are the easier your pelvic floor will release as your uterus contracts.

- Stay hydrated! Studies show your hydration level the day before you're in labor is more important than the day of. Hydration helps the tissue to stretch, can help progress labor & reduce the risk of tearing.



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Fourth Trimester

Congratulations on your bundle of joy... And take a moment to appreciate your body for growing, carrying, and birthing your new baby!

Adjusting to new motherhood and caring for a newborn is overwhelming. Remember to take time for self care to prioritize you! Postnatal Pilates helps aid your recovery after both vaginal and c-section deliveries. Postnatal Pilates will help address pregnancy related postural changes, postpartum related and child care aches and pains, and with recovery from diagnoses such as pelvic floor issues, diastasis recti, and prolapse. Our goal is to guide and prepare you as a new mom to safely return to activity, exercise, and minimize risk of injury. Sometimes in early postpartum phases you will be more limited than you were while pregnant which can be frustrating. Know that it is a short period of time (though it won't feel so!) and in the long term you will be able to recover more efficiently if you respect your body and allow adequate healing. It is worth the investment in the long term!

For the Moms

If you are enrolled in our For the Moms program your fourth trimester check in will include re-assessment, further discussion of your method of delivery and associated concerns, address if necessary pelvic floor, diastasis recti, prolapse concerns, review child care ergonomics, home program implementation and instruction for safe exercise progression and return to exercise programming.

Fourth trimester postpartum useful info & advice



- We know you are feeling eager to get back to exercise but know that establishing breath patterning and core and pelvic floor muscle recruitment patterns are vital for pressure management after pregnancy and birth. Starting here is crucial for safe exercise progression and preventing issues like leaking with running or injury down the road as your workouts get more intense.
- Generally your health care provider will clear you for exercise after 6-7 weeks but gentle Pilates based movement and deep breathing can be started sooner. This mind body connection is your cornerstone to recovery.

- Be aware of your posture and body mechanics with child care tasks.
- For breast or bottle feeding bring the baby to you, not bringing your breast or bottle to the baby. Use cushions like "my breast friend" or "boppy" to hold your baby to you & switch positions to reduce static loading and strain.
- When lifting from the crib, keep your back straight and hinge from your hips, keeping your body as close as possible to the crib. Keep the baby hugged close to you versus using outstretched arms, and use your glutes to lift by hinging from your hips back to standing.

