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WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUE

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Combat the Baby Bulge

Easy exercises any expectant mommy can do.



ASSISTED SIDE PLANK

Carrying upwards of 20 extra pounds in the belly can make any pregnant woman wary of hitting the gym, but daily exercise is extremely important not only for the mother's health, but also for the baby's. A daily workout routine strengthens the back and abdomen, increases stamina (especially during delivery) and helps to shed excess baby weight more quickly after the birth. In-home exercises such as yoga, pilates and light aerobic routines are easy to complete without having to travel to the local gym.

Sean and Laura Callahan, certified personal trainers and founders of FITT for Life in Jacksonville (fittforlife.com), recommend a couple exercises for an expecting mommy. The husband-and-wife duo teach in-home or

in-studio training for expectant mothers and others interested in some workout and culinary advice. Please contact your physician before beginning any exercise routine.

>> The Assisted Side Plank

Work the upper body, chest, shoulders and the core.

1. Start with your knees and elbows on the floor, feet together and back flat with your body parallel to the floor. Hold this position for 20 seconds. This is the resting plank.
2. Focusing on deep breathing and tightening your lower back, rotate your shoulders and

reach one arm toward the ceiling. Your upper body weight should be resting on the one elbow and shoulders should be perpendicular to the floor (pictured above). Hold this position for 20 seconds and then rotate back to the starting position.

3. Repeat these steps alternating arms and elbows. Focus on easing the weight between transitions. One transition of each arm raised and three resting planks in between is considered one circuit. Perform three sets of five to 10 circuits per set.
4. Want more of a challenge? The advanced version of this exercise calls for the arms to be extended with palms on the floor in the resting plank. Weight can also be shifted from the

PHOTO BY BRADLEY STOOKEY; MODEL: KIMTASHA ARMSTRONG



ASSISTED SPLIT SQUAT

knees onto the toes but remember to maintain a tight back that is parallel to the floor.

>> **The Assisted Split Squat**

Work the gluteal, quadriceps and hamstring muscles while strengthening the core.

1. Start in a standing position with either a chair or table at your side for balance and leverage. Step forward with one foot creating a distance equal to the length of one leg.
2. Lower the back knee, keeping head up, shoulders back and weight from the hips and back held over the forward knee. Attempt to create two right angles at both knees (pictured above). Perform 15 to 20 squats.
3. Switch legs and repeat. Perform three to five sets of 15 to 20 squat repetitions. Be sure to stretch after the squats and do not let the forward knee go past the forward toes.
4. For more of a challenge, instead of using a chair grab some dumbbells or a resistance band to make the squats more difficult.

>> **Eat Right, Too**

Expectant mothers need extra nutrients in the form of calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins and minerals. Typically, you will need about 300 more calories per day but those calories should be nutrient-rich. Pregnant women also need more calcium (about 1,200 milligrams a day). Good sources of calcium are dairy products and leafy green vegetables. Try to eat six or more small meals and between-meal snacks and drink plenty of fluids. Eating well and getting the right exercise will do both you and your baby good. *J

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