

MAMA

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PREGNANCY: STAYING ACTIVE IN THE 3RD TRIMESTER

By Dr Samantha Clarke (PhD), clinical psychologist, personal trainer and new mother

The third trimester of pregnancy is often referred to as the 'teary' stage, and with good reason. Usually you have gained around 10-15kg of very uneven weight, it's hard to sleep soundly and the overall physical discomfort is REAL: indigestion, reflux, sciatica, muscle cramps, and let's not started on the constant toilet trips!

Though withdrawing to the sanctuary of Netflix is tempting, research shows that if you can stay physically active through your pregnancy you not only have less of a chance of having a premature baby but it also helps the birthing process and the recovery after birth. Plus, staying physically and psychologically fit not only helps to manage the hormonal lows that comes with this trimester, it also helps release 'happy' hormones like oxytocin and endorphins that are also good for the baby.

So, what can you do to stay active when you feel SO uncomfortable?

KEEP UP YOUR MOVEMENT

Exercise is the best thing to help lift mood and energy levels. Include a little resistance training (body and light weights), or on days when you are stiff or aching jump into the pool for a swim. Kickboards are a great way to add some resistance to your arms and shoulders, switch on your core and get those legs moving. The best way to reduce inflammation is through moving the body.

MAKE STRETCHING A PRIORITY

Going to pregnancy yoga or stretching at home is essential. Pregnancy yoga is a great way to learn about to reduce stiffness and get information that can help during the first and second stages of labour. Not only is the movement aspect of these classes amazing, the information is empowering.

MAKE USE OF YOUR FIT BALL

It can be so uncomfortable to find a position to sit in at this stage and you may be inclined to lie on the couch, but this is the stage where the way we move and sit can be helpful to move baby into the correct position for delivery. A fit ball is a great way to help you to keep good posture, sit in your sitting bones rather than your tailbone. It also allows for stretching and movement whilst you sit encouraging you to be active.

CONTINUE TO GO FOR WALKS

One of my favourite things through pregnancy was to catch up with a friend and go for a walk, much better than talking over food or drinks. Staying active and connecting with my tribe was fantastic for my emotional and physical health.

OMEGA 3S

When you are pregnant you need lots of Omega 3s to help baby's brain development. Take a good supplement but also try eating sardines regularly. These smaller oily fish have less mercury and are a great source of Omega 3.

BONE BROTH AND GREEN JUICE

In the latter stages of pregnancy your digestion slows dramatically. So how do you get nutrients when you don't feel hungry? BTry bone broth and green juices. Liquids are so much easier to get down and are less likely to lead to reflux. Add a spoon of pea protein powder to a smoothie to help enhance protein for baby's development.

WATCH THE CRAVINGS

Often at this stage in pregnancy, with the influx of even more hormones, you may start to crave sugary junk foods like chips and chocolate. Bringing your awareness to these cravings rather than impulsively acting on them will help you to tune in and ask yourself what would be most nourishing to your baby and body right now. Choose a snack high in good fats like an avocado with lemon, a boiled egg, a cup of broth, or a protein smoothie with chia seeds. You will notice that your mood and energy will be more even through the day and you will sleep better.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO REST

There is nothing wrong with a siesta now and then, especially when you are growing a human. Allowing yourself a nap in the day can help you to feel restored and rejuvenated.

MEDITATION AND GRATITUDE

There is growing evidence that practising meditation and gratitude enhances psychological and physical health. When pregnant, it's easy to get hooked on thoughts about discomfort. Practising gratitude for the incredible process you are going through can be a great antidote to frustration and sadness. Mindfulness has also been linked to assisting in producing relaxing and loving hormones for babies and mamas-to-be.

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About Dr Samantha Clarke (PhD)

*Dr Samantha Clarke is a Clinical Psychologist, Personal Trainer and the Director of Sunshine Coast Clinical Psychology in Queensland. Samantha incorporates a holistic approach to healthcare, placing emphasis on helping each individual move towards a more fulfilling and meaningful life. **Instagram:** [RechargeMySoul](#)*