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Keep fit with regular pre and post-natal exercise

by Samantha Montpetit-Huynh

AS WE look around and bask in the glory of sun, greenery and no more snow (we hope), it is instinctual that we must get out and get some fresh air. Well, hallelujah! What better time to get started or get back into a regular exercise routine that will not only lift your spirits, but make you healthier all around.

For any new moms who had a baby this past winter, you made it. It's difficult enough when the weather is nice to get yourself together and get outside. This past winter was rough. With the ridiculous amount of snow and extreme weather alerts, I was suffering from cabin fever and I don't even have babies anymore.

Exercise during pregnancy and postpartum has limitless benefits including reducing pregnancy related discomforts and conditions, maintaining a healthy weight gain, giving you the stamina to endure labour and delivery and speeding up postpartum recovery. Statistics also show that babies of exercising mothers have higher apgar tests and overall lean muscle mass.

For many, especially during child bearing years, exercise can really become a chore. But it doesn't have to be. The trick is finding something that you enjoy doing so there's a better chance that you will stick with it. Or work out with a buddy. This can be a lifesaver for many because it forces you to be accountable. Knowing that you have someone else counting on you will give you that added

kick in the pants to keep moving. Use any reason at all that you can think of to walk instead of driving.

For pregnant women who are already exercising, continue doing what you are already used to doing during your exercise routine. As your pregnancy progresses, nature will tell you when to scale back. Just be sure not to push yourself! This is not a time to train for a marathon or 'feel the burn' during a weight training session. Your goal during pregnancy is to maintain your current fitness level. Don't worry, after the baby is born, you will get it back. All the hard work you put in during pregnancy does pay off.

For postpartum women, pushing that stroller up the hill gives you a great amount of resistance to help strengthen your legs and get that heart pumping. Regular cardiovascular and weight training will help you gain your strength back so you can run up those stairs 20 times per day changing diapers, doing laundry and just plain giving you the energy to last the next 24 hours.

Be sure to take it slow in the beginning, however. Labour and delivery is probably the toughest workout you will ever experience and your body needs time to recover. The last thing you or your baby needs is an injury because you pushed yourself too hard.

So this Mother's Day make a commitment to be the healthiest you can be. It's not going to be easy, but if you stick to it, the benefits are amazing. But be realistic. This is not going to happen overnight and you need to make a plan for action. It needs to be a lifestyle change, not a chore. You are setting the stage to be active and healthy for yourself and your family. Reason enough.

Samantha Montpetit-Huynh is the mother of two girls residing in the Beach/Danforth area. She is a Certified Personal Trainer, and holds certifications in Pre & Postnatal fitness, Nutrition & Wellness and Resist-A-Ball. She offers in-home private and semi-private training and gives work shops on the subject. You can reach her at: 647-897-5220 or visit her website at www.coreexpectations.com

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Exercise during pregnancy is good for both mother and baby

by Samantha Montpetit-Huynh

PREGNANCY IS a very exciting, overwhelming, but often exhausting time in life. Because your body is going through so many internal and external changes, many women take this time to put their feet up, eat and "enjoy" the next nine months.

However tempting this may sound, leading a sedentary lifestyle during your pregnancy could potentially cause you more discomfort and stress in the long run. There is no evidence that supports you must stop exercising just because you are pregnant.

Though this may sound easier said than done, exercising during

your pregnancy has been proven time and time again to benefit both mother and baby during gestation and postpartum. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and The Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology (CSEP) have both developed guidelines with specific heart rate, cardiovascular and strength training principles to help alleviate any concerns women may have that may deter them from participating in an exercise program.

On the other hand, Dr. James F. Clapp, an international authority and researcher on the effects of exercise in pregnancy, supports a more liberal approach. He believes as every woman and pregnancy differs,

so should their exercise routine. Depending on the fitness level of the individual prior to pregnancy, this helps to determine the intensity that they can endure during their pregnancy.

Here are just a few benefits of exercising during pregnancy:

- Increases energy
- Alleviates stress
- Decreases back pain
- Facilitates circulation
- Helps avoid excessive weight gain
- Prepares body for extra weight load
- Builds endurance and strength required for labour
- Helps reduce the chance of post-

partum depression

•Helps return of pre-pregnancy weight

In view of the advantages, however, it is recommended that you consult your physician and/or OBGYN prior to starting or continuing an exercise program. There are certain physical and health-related conditions where exercise may be contraindicated.

If you are already pregnant and are still wary about starting to exercise, just remember to start slow, but make it consistent! Walking is the best form of exercise for anyone. Twenty to 30 minutes three or more times per week is not only good for mother, but baby as well!

Research has shown that babies of exercising mothers tolerate contractions better, are less stressed during labour and are more alert after delivery. So take advantage of this time to make this the best and healthiest pregnancy for the both of you!

Samantha Montpetit-Huynh is the mother of two girls residing in the Beaches/Danforth area. She is a Certified Personal Trainer, a Pre & Postnatal Fitness Specialist and a Resista-Ball Specialist. She offers in-home private and semi-private training, fitness classes and work shops on the subject. You can reach her at 647-897-5220 or at redefinemyou@rogers.com.

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BMN's AGM to be 'quiet' event

by Sheila Blinoff

IF ONLY federal elections were this simple!

The 2007-8 board of directors of Ward 9 Community News Inc., publisher of Beach Metro News, has been acclaimed. Tomorrow's annual general meeting should be a swift and quiet affair.

The directors, who are all volunteers, provide advice and support to the staff, while acting as trustees on behalf of the community. They bring years of experience, skills and local knowledge to the smooth running of this newspaper.

The new president, David Windrim, believes in a hands-on approach. On publication day, he is at the office, sleeves rolled up, hauling, counting, and tying bundles of papers ready for the carriers. David is a founding member and past president of the Beach Triangle Residents Association. In the 1990s he served on the city committee planning a new community on the site of the old Greenwood

Beaches Lions Parade. He is the founder of Beaches Speeches Toastmasters Club. For three years Chris was one of the newspaper's area captains, dropping off papers to the carriers.

Another area captain has become the new board secretary. Paul M. Babich is a local businessman and longtime member of the Balmy Beach Club. Among his many club activities, is organizing the European tours of the Old Boys' Hockey team. He was inducted into the Balmy Beach Hall of Fame last month. He is a long-time volunteer at Community Centre 55.

Kelvin Francis, our treasurer, has provided 22 years of financial continuity and advice to Beach Metro News. (The 2006 financial report was published in the May 29 issue.) Kelvin is employed by a large communications company. Four years ago he officially took over the delivery route started by his children in 1991.

The new past-president is Jean Cochrane, an author and retired journalist, well known for her involvement with Senior ' ' ' Jean is



Expert tackles pregnancy fitness questions

Dear Samantha,

I am five months pregnant and starting to show. I was recently at the gym working out and another member approached me and told me I shouldn't lift weights because I'm straining myself and it's not safe for the baby. I thought as long as I continued doing what I have always done, I was safe. Now I'm confused. Please help.

Lisa Camp, Beach

Dear Lisa,

You are correct. After you have visited your doctor and have been cleared of any medical conditions, there is no need to stop your exercise program just because you are pregnant. This is a time to celebrate your body and feel good about yourself and what better way than to keep fit both physically and mentally.

Pregnancy, however, is not a time to increase your intensity or train for a marathon. Your goal should be to maintain your fitness level, not try to improve it. Exercise intensity should be where you can carry on a verbal conversation and work within your maternal heart rate range.

As your pregnancy continues and you fatigue more easily, you will find that you will naturally cut back on the weight being lifted, therefore, decreasing your intensity. Listen to your body. Nobody knows it better than you.

Dear Samantha,

I just recently found out that I am pregnant and I'm thrilled, but terrified about the impending weight gain. I am naturally thin, so I never felt a need to exercise until now. Is it safe to start an exercise program now that I am pregnant?

M. Francis, Toronto

Dear Ms. Francis,

SAMANTHA MONTPETT-HUYNH

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647-897-5220
redefineyou@rogers.com

If you are not currently exercising, it is recommended that you do not start an exercise program in your first trimester of pregnancy. Due to the neurological changes that are taking place and the first trimester being such a fragile time, I would suggest waiting until your second trimester before starting to exercise. At this time, walking on a regular basis is the safest form of exercise for you.

For the regular exerciser, however, continuing with your current exercise routine is the safest route. Adding or changing your program is better saved for the second trimester.

Dear Samantha,

Is it safe to do abdominal crunches during pregnancy?

Tamara S, East York

Dear Tamara,

ABSolutely!! What better way to prepare your abdominals for all the hard work required during labour? Strong abdominals also assist in carrying your baby and supporting the lower back, thus, helping to alleviate low back pain which many pregnant women suffer from. Diastasis Recti, a separation of the rectus abdominis will require you to alter your abdominal exercises. Diastasis can be confirmed by your doctor.

Dear Samantha,

Since I became pregnant, I am the biggest klutz! I feel like I have no sense of balance and I'm afraid I'm going to sprain my ankle because I have two left

feet. Is this normal?

Catherine M, Toronto

Dear Catherine,

Gee.. that sounds very familiar! During your pregnancy, a hormone called Relaxin is excreted to prepare your body for your growing fetus and delivery. This hormone 'relaxes' ALL your joints, giving your body more flexibility. Now, while flexibility is good, you also have to be a lot more careful as you are more susceptible to injury. Therefore, jerky movements or sudden changes in direction should be avoided.

The balance issue pertains more to your centre of gravity shifting up and forward as your pregnancy progress. This is why a lot of women tend to lean back as they get bigger. Postural correctness and awareness can help combat this very common problem.

Samantha Montpetit-Huynh is a Pre & Post Natal Fitness Specialist working in the Beaches/East York area. She does in home personal training, teaches pre & post natal fitness classes and gives workshops on the subject. You can contact her at redefineyou@rogers.com or 647-897-5220.

Make your home warm & inviting

Cont'd. from Page 18

It's all about combinations - getting the suitable mix of colours and accessories. More than ever before, 2007 will be about the coming together of the two most important elements for any well-designed interior: style and comfort. Regardless of how stylish it may be, if a room doesn't make you feel comfortable, it's not well planned.

Ann Francis Oakes, conceptual designer, artist, author and art therapist, can be reached at annfo@rogers.com.



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