

# Exercise and Pregnancy at Kaya

## Congratulations!

We're so glad you've chosen Kaya to take care of your health and wellness needs during this special time. There are a few important guidelines and bits of information to go through before you continue your training with us.

## Training at KAYA while Pregnant

### What do I do now?

You will need to collect a Pregnancy Acknowledgement Form from Reception, fill it out, and return it. You will also need to attain a letter of Medical Clearance for group exercise from your GP or OBGYN. Please have them specify the type of class you will be attending on your written clearance (e.g. 'group reformer Pilates'). You will not be able to attend the club until these two documents have been submitted to Reception, if you don't have another appointment for a while, you are more than welcome to have the letter emailed to us. You will then be advised on any further action needed, depending on how you use the club.

### How can I participate at Kaya?

Pregnant members can use the weights floor and cardio area, and attend Group Reformer Classes (GRC) all the way through their pregnancy. If you've regularly been attending Yoga, you can continue with Hatha and Yin classes. If you've been regularly attending Spinning, you may continue to attend with medical clearance to do so until the end of your first trimester. Unfortunately, we can't accommodate pregnant people in our Fitness Circuit or Barre classes at Kaya. The reasons for this vary, but are mostly safety concerns relating to risk of trauma, class size, the common movements used, and the ability for your Instructor to monitor exercise intensity. Please note this does not mean that you can't train at a higher intensity if you are used to doing so (and have medical clearance), it just means you won't be able to do it in these particular classes at Kaya. Our specialised Instructors and Personal Trainers are always available should you wish to pursue training outside the constraints of the class environment.

## Benefits of Exercise whilst Pregnant

Maintaining physical activity levels is extremely important for everyone, and there are many benefits to continuing your current program or even beginning a new one if you were previously inactive. By following a few simple recommendations, you can easily update your movement habits to support you in the months leading up to your birth experience.

Regular physical activity during pregnancy may:

- Enhance psychological well-being
- Reduce stress
- Improve or maintain current fitness levels
- Reduce the risk of pregnancy-related complications such as gestational diabetes, back pain, oedema etc
- Minimize potential perinatal complications for you and your baby

# Exercise and Pregnancy at Kaya

## General exercise guidelines for pregnancy

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends the same amount of physical activity for both pregnant and non-pregnant populations: at least 150 minutes per week. For pregnancy, it is recommended that these 150 minutes are split over at least three days per week.

Your exercise intensity should be guided by your previous activity levels, remembering that pregnancy will not be a great time to try to reach new world records. Your body is really busy growing a baby! You can exercise at your previous intensity (perhaps you're a runner, or maybe you love to swim or lift weights) if you do not present any contraindications and you have been medically cleared to do so. There is no current evidence to suggest that higher intensity exercise is harmful, but this will depend on your previous fitness levels, and medical history.

If you're starting exercise for the first time while pregnant (or starting a new form of exercise, like Reformer Pilates), please follow your treating medical practitioner's advice and seek guidance from one of our experience Instructors or Personal trainers. There are a few other general recommendations to follow, both at Kaya and if exercising on your own.

- Exercise should incorporate both aerobic (cardio) and resistance (weighted) elements
- Complete a thorough warm up and cool down period, especially if you are completing exercise which significantly elevates your heart rate
- Pelvic floor exercises are recommended to maintain the strength of these muscles under the increasing load of the baby and in preparation for labour
- Avoid exercise laying on your back (supine) after 16 weeks. This can compress a major blood vessel and limit your blood flow and that of your baby
- Avoid physical activity in the heat
- Avoid skydiving, scuba diving, horse riding, skiing, surfing, gymnastics, and contact sports.
- Stop immediately if you experience any persistent shortness of breath that doesn't resolve with rest; chest pain; regular and painful uterine contractions; vaginal bleeding or persistent loss of fluid; dizziness or faintness that doesn't resolve with rest.

## Considerations

As your baby grows bigger, there will be various ways exercise will need to change to accommodate your safety and comfort. Everyone can experience pregnancy differently, but in general it's good to consider the following when exercising or even just during day to day life.

- **Posture changes** Your posture and centre of gravity will change as your baby grows bigger, as often as a day-to-day basis. This can affect your balance so it's important to be aware of this during

## Exercise and Pregnancy at Kaya

exercise but also during activities such as climbing stairs, stepping over objects, getting in and out of the car, reaching for things etc.

- **Hormonal changes** Various hormonal changes can influence the flexibility of your ligaments and joints, particularly in the spine and pelvis. For the most part, this is not something you need to worry about. If, however, you do experience any uncomfortable sensations or persistent pain in these areas, it's best to refer to your healthcare provider. Your Instructors can follow any advice you receive and modify your exercises accordingly during class. If you haven't sought treatment but something doesn't feel right during a class, it's important to stop the exercise and let your Instructor know.

- **Blood pressure** Be aware when changing positions (like going from laying down to sitting up) that this can sometimes make you a little dizzy or faint if you do so too fast. This also means it's best to avoid long holds in whole body exercises, such as squat holds or plank holds. Your Instructor will let you know how to modify the exercises during class or advise when it's best to take a rest.

- **Blood sugar** If you find yourself faint, nauseous, or more tired than usual during exercise it's a good idea to have a snack about an hour before your workout to maintain adequate blood sugar levels for exercise. Remember to keep hydrated as well!

### Contraindications

If you have any serious exercise contraindications, your healthcare provider will flag them for you and will consider them when you ask them for clearance to attend group exercise. If you are cleared for group exercise, there are several contraindications that apply to GRC at Kaya. Your instructor will modify exercises for you during classes so that everything is safe and comfortable. It's very important to follow your Instructors' guidance during classes. If you have any questions about the directions at all you are more than welcome to ask!

### Postnatal

Once your healthcare provider has provided clearance for you to exercise again after your pregnancy, you can simply bring a copy of this clearance and return to Kaya. It's important to let your Instructor know that you are postnatal, and if there are any complications pertinent to exercise that they will need to provide modifications for. If you experience any abdominal separation, pelvic floor issues, or any other persistent pain, it's best to seek the advice of a specialist practitioner as this is not something that can be diagnosed or treated in a group class or by your Kaya Instructor. Your Instructor can certainly work around these issues and follow the advice of your healthcare practitioner during classes. Please remember to be patient and gentle with yourself and your body during this time. As with any time off exercise, it can take a bit of practice to build up your previous fitness levels and get back into your routine again.