PILATES for PREGNANCY

fitness/healthy pregnancy

Safe Moves for Strong Abs

Can you still work your abs when pregnant? Yes, with some modifications, says Sarah Picot, a certified Pilates instructor who specializes in exercise during pregnancy. In fact, it's a good idea, because strong core muscles aid in delivery and help prevent low back pain. Picot suggests doing standing leg circles: ❶ Place your right hand against a wall or chair, put your left hand on your waist, and place your heels together, feet forming a V. ❷ With the knee slightly bent, raise your left leg to a 45-degree angle. Make 5 small circles with your leg, then reverse direction. ❸ Switch hands and repeat, using your right leg. Do three times per week. For more moves, visit pilatesforpregnancy.com.

Music to Burn Your Face

Playing music when you're pregnant could improve your infant's IQ, according to Carista Luminare-Rosen, Ph.D., author of *Parenting Begins Before Conception* (Healing Arts Press, 2000). The vibrations stimulate hearing and can enhance brain development. Make sure it's loud enough for you to hear clearly and for your baby to be able to detect the tones. Rosen recommends soft, nurturing music that mimics a mother's heartbeat, like: ★ Ambient New Age such as *Pure Moods* or Enya's *Paint the Sky With Stars* ★ Soft jazz like Ella Fitzgerald's *The Best of the Songbooks: Ballads* ★ Sounds of nature like *A Walk Deep in the Woods* ★ Classical albums like *Baby Needs Mozart* or *Baby Needs Brahms*.

Stay More Relaxed During Labor

Be as calm, cool and collected as possible during labor with Motherlove Herbal Company's Birth & Baby set. Included in the kit is a two-ounce massage oil made with lavender, grapeseed and apricot oils that's designed to relax tense back and stomach muscles. A two-ounce aromatherapy spritzer made with uplifting grapefruit, orange and lavender essential oils will refresh and rejuvenate you. $13.95; available at motherlove.com.

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