



Guidelines for safe yoga poses during pregnancy

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If you are practicing yoga during your pregnancy it is best to check with your doctor or midwife. It is recommended to start after 14 weeks.

As a general rule, modify poses to make space for your growing belly and find poses that are similar but less demanding on your body. If in doubt, tune into your growing baby with slow breathing rhythms and relaxation poses during the class. Do modified versions of Child, Cat, Squat and Butterfly poses.

Focus on stability and strength, rather than flexibility and endurance

AVOID over-stretching or holding a pose for extended periods (>30 secs).

PRACTICE within 75% of your flexibility; shorten your stance; and/or use props (blocks, chair or wall) to create stability. Safe squat is 40 cm from ground.

Use supported modifications for forward bends, closed twists and backbends

AVOID compressing the uterus (e.g. forward bends or closed twists) or overstretching the abdominal muscles (e.g. backbends).

PRACTICE using a chair when forward bending and widening the legs. Do open twists by moving from the head to the waist only. Restorative poses, such as Supported Bridge with block (<32 weeks) and Reclining Butterfly with bolster, generally offer similar but less demanding backbends.

Use substitutes for inversions, twisted standing, abdominal, and poses lying on your stomach

AVOID inversions, like shoulder/hand/head stand; compressing the abdomen in twisted standing poses (e.g. Revolving Triangle etc.); and abdominal poses like Boat or Plank. No lying on your stomach in Cobra, Locust and Bow poses.

PRACTICE substituting with similar poses; Legs up the Wall (<32 weeks); open standing poses; and Cat/Balancing Cat pose. Practice pelvic tilts, contracting the pelvic floor muscles, (Mula Bandha) in Standing, Easy Seated or Cat pose.

Lying on your back or if feeling dizzy when standing

AVOID lying flat on your back if you feel dizzy, sweaty, nauseous or short of breath. Avoid raising the hands above your head if dizzy when standing.

PRACTICE using support under the knees or lie on your left side. Use a bolster to raise your back off the floor and ease the pressure off the inferior vena cava (returning vein to the heart). As a rule of thumb, if you feel dizzy then turn onto your left side in relaxation and keep your hands on your hips in standing poses.

Breathing/ Pranayama

AVOID fast rhythms, like Kapalabhati, breath holding or, Viloma.

PRACTICE the slow breathing techniques, such as the Ocean breath, Ujjayi and alternative nostril breathing (i.e. Nadi Shodhana) to bring focus and preparation for birth.

Note: If your baby is breech after 32 weeks, **avoid squats**. Do Puppy pose instead to create space for the baby to move.

For an extended version of this handout and to read about the 26 yoga poses you can safely practice in your pregnancy visit our website www.yogababy.com.au/guidelines