

YOUR GUIDE TO

# RUNNING

DURING PREGNANCY AND BEYOND



ACTIVE  
PREGNANCY  
FOUNDATION

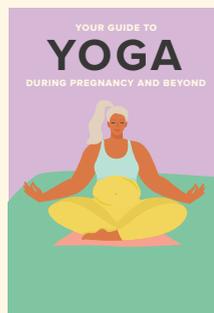
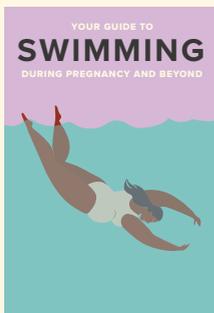
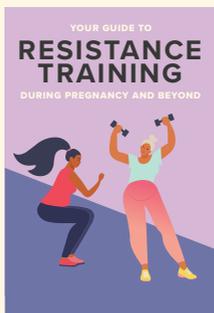
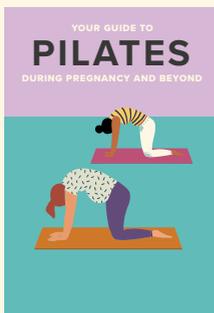
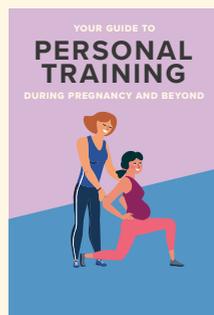
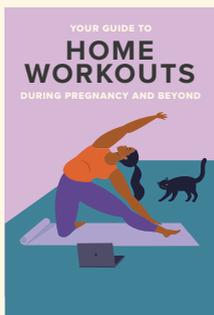
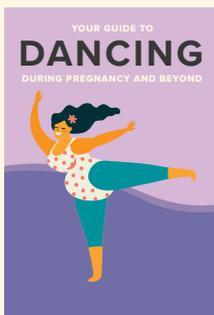
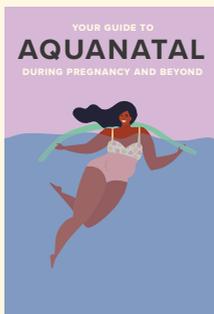


THE  
NATIONAL  
LOTTERY



SPORT  
ENGLAND

## ACTIVITIES COVERED IN THIS SERIES



# ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Running and jogging are increasingly popular activities during pregnancy and the postnatal period. As it doesn't require a set location and/or specialised equipment, it is a very accessible activity. However, if you were not a regular runner before pregnancy, running may not be a suitable activity for you. Whilst jogging can be done at a lower intensity, running is considered a high impact cardiovascular activity. Even the fittest runners may need to adapt the frequency, intensity and duration of their runs as they progress through pregnancy. A good guide to make sure you don't over-

**Already  
active?  
Keep going!**

exert yourself is the 'Talk Test' - you should be able to hold a conversation, but not sing.

Running is relatively inexpensive, although it's important to wear well fitting trainers or running shoes, a supportive pair of leggings and bra. Consider pregnancy specific clothing to support your bump, back, hips and breasts. Running and jogging is great for your physical and mental health. It can be done alone, or with other people, at any time of the day, and can also be fun and sociable.

**Not active?  
Start  
gradually!**



# DO's

- ⚡ Incorporate more walking breaks and stop to rest if and when you need to.
- ⚡ You can reduce impact by running on softer surfaces, avoiding or limiting downhill running, or increasing the level of cushioning in your shoes.
- ⚡ Wear well fitting trainers or running shoes, a supportive pair of leggings and bra.

- ⚡ Aim to jog or run at an intensity where you can maintain a conversation, but can't sing (i.e. "The Talk Test").
- ⚡ Eat well and drink regularly before and throughout the session to prevent dehydration and overheating.

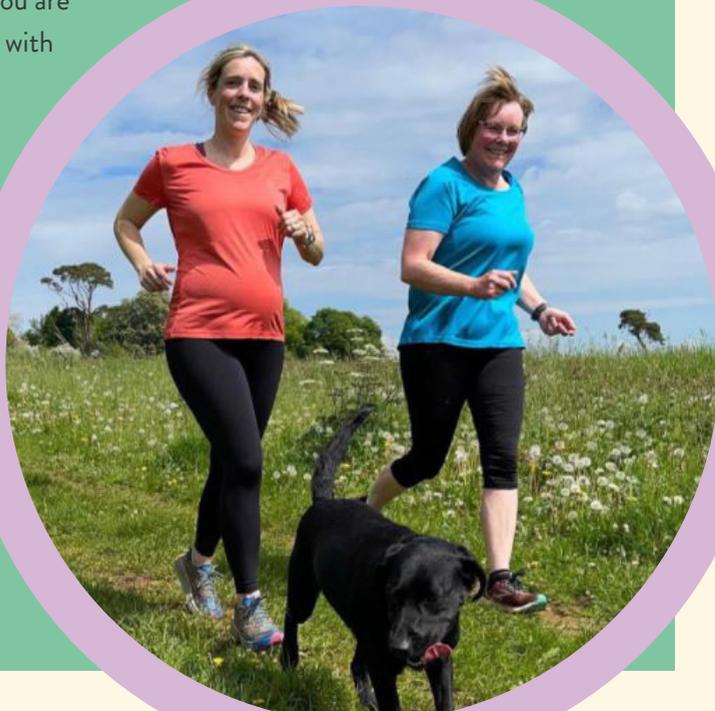


# DON'Ts

- ⚡ Avoid overheating and feeling out of breath for extended periods of time.
  - ⚡ Don't continue running through pain, lightheadedness, breathing difficulties, contractions, vaginal bleeding, amniotic fluid leakage or any other unusual symptoms. Stop and seek advice.
  - ⚡ Do not push yourself to your absolute limit.
- ⚡ Avoid running on uneven surfaces particularly in the later stages of your pregnancy, as this increases the risk of falling.
  - ⚡ Don't continue running against medical advice.

# TOP TIPS

- ★ Very few women are able to run comfortably throughout their pregnancy, so don't worry if you have to make adjustments or stop running.
- ★ Whilst it can be really hard to 'not' run, consider cross training e.g. switching some of your running sessions for lower impact workouts like walking, jogging, swimming, etc. to help maintain your fitness and routine.
- ★ A regular workout routine during their pregnancy means you are more likely to re-engage with physical activities after childbirth.
- ★ Before your jog or run, consume 30-50g of carbohydrate e.g. a banana or glass of orange juice. After your run or jog – have a recovery snack or meal within 30 minutes e.g. a milkshake or eggs on toast.
- ★ Consulting with a physiotherapist who has specialist training in abdominal wall and pelvic floor assessment and rehabilitation can be helpful throughout pregnancy and after birth.



# AFTER CHILDBIRTH

Give your body time to heal, prioritise rest and recovery in the early weeks. If you've had a straightforward birth, you can start gentle exercises as soon as you feel up to it. This could include walking, gentle stretches, pelvic floor exercises and exercises that target the deepest layer of the abdominal muscles. If you've had a caesarean or any surgical intervention and/or complications, your recovery time will be longer.

The 6-8 week postnatal check is a good time to discuss physical activity with your healthcare professional. Reintroduce activities gradually and focus on technique, breathing, pelvic floor and abdominal function.

Only after having built up moderate intensity physical activities and in the absence of any signs or symptoms of pelvic floor or abdominal wall dysfunction, should higher impact activities, such as running, gradually resume. Consider seeking the support of a specialist pelvic health physiotherapist during this time.

Gradually increase the impact and duration of your runs by using a

programme such as Couch to 5K. Begin with short sessions on a soft surface (grass or trail), or a slight incline, before moving on to flat runs. Slowly increase distance on the soft surface, before finally running on the road again.

Breastfeeding, when being active at a moderate intensity or when taking part in strength training, is safe and does not impact on breast milk quality or infant growth. Expressing or feeding your baby before running is recommended. Also consider investing in a suitable bra that will give you support whilst training and remember to keep breast pads with you to manage any leaking that can occur.



# GENERAL ADVICE

Ask your healthcare professional about the Chief Medical Officers' national guidance for physical activity during pregnancy and after childbirth.

## DURING PREGNANCY

It's worth noting that the national guidance applies to uncomplicated pregnancies. We suggest taking this resource with you to your next appointment and to discuss your active pregnancy with your midwife or other healthcare professional.

**If it feels comfortable, KEEP GOING**

**If it's uncomfortable, STOP & SEEK ADVICE**



## AFTER CHILDBIRTH BIRTH TO 12 MONTHS

Reintroduction of physical activity after birth should be gradual and individualised.

The 6-8 week postnatal check is a good time to discuss this with your healthcare team, remember to take this document with you.

With any signs and symptoms of pelvic floor and/or abdominal wall dysfunction, more intense activities should not resume and referral to a specialist pelvic health physiotherapist is recommended.



“Being active has many mental and physical health benefits, so as a midwife, I can’t wait to spread the word and share these fantastic resources with new mums, mums-to-be and my professional colleagues.”

Dr Jacque Gerrard, Midwife  
MBE DU<sub>niv</sub> MSc RM RGN



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This resource was produced by The Active Pregnancy Foundation in collaboration with Emma Brockwell, Shefali Christopher, Gráinne Donnelly and Sophie Power.

The series of resources has been funded by Sport England and The National Lottery.

## DISCLAIMER

Always consult and follow the advice of your healthcare professional.  
This resource does not constitute or replace medical advice.

## CONNECT WITH US



[www.activepregnancyfoundation.org](http://www.activepregnancyfoundation.org)