

Pregnancy Yoga: Notes and Guidelines for Teacher Training

As soon as woman conceives, her body prepares for carrying a child. Hormonal changes affect the woman's metabolism, as well as her intuition and mind. The energy of a pregnancy yoga practice is different from the energy of regular Kundalini Yoga classes. For example in the pregnant woman the navel centre is very open, and she is extremely sensitive. So it is advised to go to pre-natal yoga classes if they exist. Otherwise these guidelines will help you make the most of any Kundalini Yoga Class.

Rule of Thumb - Basic Points

- Listen to your own body!!!
- Rest when you feel the need to.
- Do not exercise to the point of exhaustion.point
- Instincts and intuition are paramount (the inner wisdom) in pregnant women.
- You are advised to confirm with your doctor that you can participate in yoga

Breathing

- No single nostril breathing: the body benefits from more oxygen intake.
- No holding the breath in for more than 10 seconds
- No holding the breath on the exhale for more than a few seconds
- No Breath of Fire (Light BoF OK in 1st trimester, if health permits.)

1st Trimester, up to 14 weeks gestation

Enjoy yourself and carry on as normal! If there is a history of miscarriage, however, do not engage in unusual exercise in these early stages.

After the 120th day (into 5th month) of pregnancy, i.e. 2nd Trimester

Anything which interferes with the physiology and flow of energy within the pelvis and lower abdomen is not recommended. Therefore **avoid:**

- Heavy abdominal strengthening exercises, e.g. double leg lifts, bow pose, stretch pose.
- Body locks - diaphragm lock and full root lock
(pelvic floor exercises are good for after birth)
- Exercises on the stomach
- Sat Kriya
- Full body inversions (head stand, hand stand, shoulder stand, plough)
- No pumping the navel
- Constricting postures e.g. baby pose, (on the back) knees to chest
- Exercises that aggravate existing weakness or injuries
- Heavy detoxifying exercises
- No Venus Kriyas
- Heavy thigh strengthening postures, e.g. up & down squats
- Loud or intense gong

3rd Trimester, after 26 weeks gestation

In addition to the above... do not do the following:

- Lying on the back because of the pressure of the full uterus on the inferior vena cava. Relax lying on the side with a pillow.
Left side is recommended, but both sides are ok.
- Partial body inversion, e.g. triangle pose, standing leg stretches.
- Exercises and breathing that over-stimulate (the pulse should not go above 140 beats per minute)
- Leg lifts (except lying on the side)
- Long mantra recitation which can cause to feel breathless
- Exercises lying on the back (vena cava syndrome)
- Back bends (full camel, wheel pose) or exaggerated sway back posture, e.g. cow

There are other yogic activities, however, that the pregnant woman should do **more of:**

- Walking (especially recommended with partner)
- Singing
- Kundalini Bhakti Mantra
- Meditations with the arms up to simulate the discomfort of contractions and practice dealing with it
- Dancing for pleasure
- Getting together with others

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Appendix: Some Basic Positions which are fine for Pregnancy Yoga

- Easy Pose
- Butterfly
- Life Nerve Stretch
- Cat and Cow
- Squat
- Spinal Flex
- Arm Exercises
- Shoulder Exercises
- Neck Exercises
- Relaxation: on side or back (before 5th month)
- Conscious Breathing
- Techniques of relaxation, breathing, meditation, and gentle yoga