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Can you still tone up while pregnant

This arms and legs routine, compiled by personal trainer and yoga instructor Teri Hanson, can be done throughout your pregnancy. Aim to do all of the exercises 3 times a week. Warm up by taking a brisk 5- to 10-minute walk; pump or swing your arms to warm up your upper body, adding arm circles if you like. When you’ve completed the workout, cool down by stretching your arms, back, and legs. Hold each stretch without bouncing for about 30 seconds; don’t overstretch. RELATED: Is It Safe to Exercise During Pregnancy? Remember to consult your healthcare provider before starting this pregnancy arms and legs workout program. Sit back in a chair with your feet flat on the floor so your upper back is gently touching the chair back. Cup a dumbbell vertically between thumbs and forefingers and hold it behind your head, elbows bent and pointed toward the ceiling. Pull your navel in toward your spine to keep from swaying; squeeze shoulder blades together while keeping shoulders down. Keeping elbows stationary, straighten your arms, lifting the dumbbell toward the ceiling. Lower arms to starting position and repeat. Recommended weight: one 8- to 10-pound dumbbell. Do 2 sets of 10 reps, resting 1 minute between sets. What it does for you: This move gives great shape to the back of your upper arms and shoulders (and it’s easy to do throughout your pregnancy). Trimester tip: In the first trimester, you can do this standing; in your last trimester, place a pillow behind your back for support. Sit on the edge of a chair, feet flat on the floor. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, arms hanging by your sides so elbows are against your side, palms facing forward and wrists straight. Pull your navel toward your spine to help you sit up tall and keep your back from arching. Pull your shoulder blades down and back. Keeping your elbows stationary, bend one arm, curling dumbbell toward your shoulder. Lower; then bend the other arm for one rep (a rep equals a curl with both arms). Recommended weight: 5-10 pounds in each hand. Do 1-2 sets of 10 reps, resting 1 minute between sets. Trimester tip: As your pregnancy progresses, you may want to sit further back in the chair and place a pillow behind your back for support. RELATED: Exercises to Help You Prepare for Childbirth Stand with your feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing your body, and let your arms hang by your sides. Pull your navel toward your spine to help you stand tall. Squeeze your shoulder blades down and back; keeping a slight arc to your arms, lift arms out and up to shoulder height. Slowly lower and repeat. Do 1-2 sets of 10 reps, resting 1 minute between sets. Recommended weight: 3-8 pounds in each hand. What it does for you: This move gives shape to your shoulders by strengthening your upper back muscles and teaches you how to maintain proper posture. Trimester tip: In your second and third trimesters, sit in a chair and place a pillow behind your back for support. Stand with your legs hip-width apart, hands on your hips. Pull your navel toward your spine to stand tall, tailbone pointing down to the floor. Squeeze your shoulder blades down and back. Keeping your body weight toward your heels, bend both knees, lowering hips to the floor as if sitting in a chair; don’t let your knees extend over your toes. Straighten legs to starting position, squeezing buttocks at the top of the lift to bring your hips back under your shoulders. Do 2 sets of 15 reps. Trimester tip: Hold on to the back of a chair for balance in the third trimester. RELATED: Mommy-and-Me Workout: 7 Ways to Exercise with Baby Stand with your right side to a chair. Hold on to the back for support and place your left hand on your hip. Shift your weight to your right leg so you are balanced without leaning; lift your left foot off the floor and slightly in front of the midline of your body. Keeping your hips and shoulders square, and without rotating your hips or shoulders, sweep your left leg up and out to the left. Return to starting position and repeat for reps; then switch sides. Do 2 sets of 15 reps. What it does for you: This move strengthens and tones your upper hips and strengthens the hip rotators, which can help to prevent sciatica. It also helps to keep your hips stable as your pelvis expands and loosens in pregnancy (a response to the relaxin hormone). Stand with your right side to a chair. Hold on to the back for support and place your left hand on your hip. Bend your left knee to rest your left foot against your right calf (position A). Extend your left leg out in front of you, then return to position A. Without leaning forward, extend your left leg behind you, squeezing buttocks; then return to position A. Repeat for reps; switch to other side. Do 2 sets of 15 reps on each leg. What it does for you: This move helps to strengthen and tone your legs and butt; it also teaches you how to maintain balance as your belly grows. RELATED: The Best Pregnancy Exercise Classes Back to Top If you think arm workouts aren’t necessary for new or expecting moms, learning about functional training may change your mind. Functional training is a fitness methodology designed to help you complete daily tasks with a reduced risk of injury or fatigue. Essentially, functional training helps you gain more strength and stamina to move through life with ease. And pregnancy arm workouts are exactly that — functional training. Just think about the upper-body strength you’re going to need every time you lift that infant, then that toddler, then that small child. Find out what makes arm workouts for pregnancy so valuable both now and as your child grows. Plus, learn seven great arm exercises that you can add to your prenatal routine for a stronger, healthier upper body. Just remember to check in with your doctor prior to beginning a new exercise routine during pregnancy. Benefits of arm workouts during pregnancyDoing arm workouts during pregnancy prepares your body for life with a newborn — just think about the hefty weight of a car seat! Specifically, your prenatal workout should incorporate lifting, carrying, picking up, pushing and pulling moves to get ready for life as a new parent. What’s more, arm workouts during pregnancy can help prevent posture problems. Your growing pregnancy belly can often cause an expecting mom’s shoulders to round forward. Performing pulling movements in your upper-body workouts, for example, targets important back muscles. Strengthening this area can help realign the spine and shoulders and ward off hunching. Arm exercises to avoid during pregnancyWhile arm exercises are generally safe during pregnancy, there are a few things to keep in mind — mostly, the amount of weight you’re lifting. While there’s no need to stop lifting weights during pregnancy, avoid picking up too much weight too soon — a good practice whether you’re pregnant or not. If a weight is too heavy for you to do an exercise with proper form, this could impact your breathing pattern and therefore the proper use of your deep abdominal muscles. Play it safe and stick with lighter dumbbells, or use resistance bands. You’ll also want to watch your form when lifting any amount of weight overhead. Failing to properly brace and engage your core could cause you to arch your back and up your risk for pain or injury. Best arm exercises during pregnancyNow that you’ve got the bases covered, it’s time to get to work on getting strong for you and your baby. Check out the arm exercises below that you can work into your existing prenatal fitness routine. You can also move through each exercise in a circuit, performing two or three total rounds, for a complete arm workout during pregnancy. Reverse fly Begin standing. Hinge at the hips, and maintain a flat back and neutral spine. Holding one 5- to 8-pound dumbbell in each hand, bring weights in toward the midline at belly-button height with your palms facing each other and elbows out wide. Exhale and lift arms out to the side and back, squeezing your shoulder blades together to engage the back. Inhale and slowly lower the weights back down to the starting position. Do 10 reps. Reverse tricep dip Sitting on a sturdy chair or bench, place palms on the front edge of the seat with fingers wrapping around the bottom. With both heels planted on the ground, lift hips so butt is forward and hovering off the seat. Your shoulders should be in line with your wrists. Inhale and bend your elbows toward the back of the chair, keeping your arms tight to the sides of your body, until the arms are roughly at a 90-degree angle. Press through your palms to straighten the arms and lift hips back up. Do 8 to 12 reps. Deadlift with forward press Begin standing with feet shoulder-width apart holding a 5- to 8-pound dumbbell in each hand. Inhale and hinge at the waist to lower dumbbells in front of shins, keeping palms faced in and weight close to your body. Reach down to roughly low- to mid-shin height or when hamstrings catch. Exhale and engage the pelvic floor and deep abdominal muscles. Press through your heels returning to standing while simultaneously bringing weights to chest height, elbows out wide. Press both arms out directly in front of you at chest height, then return to starting position. Do 8 reps. Wide-grip row with resistance band Sit upright in a chair with your feet flat on the floor and spine neutral. Hold a resistance band in both hands with grip slightly wider than your shoulders. Keeping your arms straight, lift them up until you reach chest-height. Inhale, and bend arms to pull hands apart and stretch the band, keeping elbows lifted, drawing them back into a wide row. Squeeze the shoulder blades together and keep the chest wide, but avoid arching your low back. Exhale and slowly straighten your arms straight back out to the starting position. Keep arms lifted, never fully releasing the band’s tension. Repeat. Do 10 reps. Forward and lateral arm raise Begin standing with knees slightly bent, feet about shoulder-distance apart. Holding one 5- to 8-pound dumbbell in each hand, with your arms down in front of thighs and your palms facing your body, lift straight arms up directly in front of you to shoulder height. Lower arms back down with control. Next, with arms at your sides and palms facing in, lift straight arms up and out to the sides to shoulder height. Lower arms back down with control. Do 10 reps. Quadruped scapular push-up Begin in an all-fours position with shoulders stacked above wrists and hips above knees. Exhale to engage your deep core muscles and lift your pelvic floor to stabilize the spine and pelvis. Keeping your arms straight, retract shoulder blades pulling them up and together. Inhale and protract the shoulder blades away from each other. Do 12 reps. Crescent lunge with single-arm row to triceps kick back With left leg forward and right leg back, bend left leg to 90-degree angle, keeping right leg straight behind you. Hinge forward slightly at the waist, maintaining a neutral spine. Hold one 5- to 8-pound dumbbell in your right hand (the same side as your straight leg) with your arm stretched straight down toward the floor, and place the other hand on your hip for extra stability. Bring your right elbow back, keeping weight close to your body, to row the weight up and back. From this bent position, extend your forearm to bring weight back and straighten your right arm. Keep the elbow static. Reverse the movement by bending your elbow, and bringing the weight back down toward the floor. Do 8 to 10 reps on each side. What to Expect When You’re Expecting, 5th edition, Heidi Murkoff. WhatToExpect.com, Exercises to Avoid During Pregnancy, November 2021. WhatToExpect.com, Benefits of Exercise During Pregnancy, November 2021. WhatToExpect.com, The Best Pregnancy Workouts and Exercises You Can Do While Expecting, July 2021. WhatToExpect.com, How to Do a Full-Body Prenatal Strength Workout Using a Chair, May 2019. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Exercise During Pregnancy, July 2019. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Physical Activity and Exercise During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period, April 2020. Peri Hughes, Pre- and Post-Natal Fitness Specialist and Creator of PH Method, San Francisco, CA. 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