



# YOGA FOR ALL TRIMESTERS

## MODULE 1: MATERNITY MINDSET

# PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

- Each pregnancy and birth experience is unique, special and individual.
- The more instinctive the woman becomes with her breathing and her body, the easier she can go with the flow: the ultimate surrender required for labour and birth. She needs to learn to control her attitude to the situation; not try control the situation. Hence yoga can be incredibly beneficial for the future moms.
- What the mom requires is to be encouraged to step into her power and focus on an “empowered birth experience” with the best outcome for baby, mom and dad.
- The more focused, relaxed and comfortable the Pregnant Woman is in her body, the better she will be to cope with the birth journey.



# MATERNITY MINDSET

- During the pregnancy journey the woman needs to learn to slow down, adapt and accommodate to her changing body and the needs of her growing child within.
- The focus is on nurturing, nourishing, relaxing and surrendering – not about detoxing or over-extending. Learning to embrace going with the flow – becoming acquainted with the ultimate surrender to the power of “being in the now: the present moment”.
- Practicing and teaching yoga during pregnancy should encourage personal empowerment; learning to adapt to change gently, easily, effortlessly and joyfully.
- Teachers should be mindful of their own presentation and personal opinions, always being respectful so as not to trigger the hormonally driven and emotional pregnant woman, who may be challenged by her changing body image.



# BENEFITS OF YOGA IN PREGNANCY

There are many benefits of exercising and practicing yoga for both mom and baby.

These include:

- Strength and conditioning
- Enhances self-confidence
- Balances the mind
- Breathing is a major tool for labour
- Self-awareness and self-love
- Time out for mom.
- Helps with water retention
- Improves posture which may reduce pain
- Helps balance blood pressure
- Opens pelvis for more comfort during pregnancy and labour
- Recovery after birth is quicker



# GENERAL FITNESS GUIDELINES

- Exercising for 30 minutes 3 or more times per week is recommended, however this will vary according to the woman's previous history of activity/fitness level.
- Cardio-based activities such as walking are very important to keep the blood flowing and should be included in the warm up before training.
- Exercises should include all components of fitness, i.e. strength, endurance and flexibility.
- Leave out any exercises that don't feel good, modify and accommodate. As a teacher, focus on what she can do rather than what she can't. Work at a pace that she can manage and keep up, especially in a group class.



# EFFECTS OF PREGNANCY HORMONES

- **Progesterone** creates feelings of fatigue and can be responsible for the increased need for sleep that pregnant women present. Its presence may cause a rise in basal temperature as well as breathing rate.
- **Relaxin** allows the pregnant woman to become more flexible, so she may feel that she can stretch further than before. Make sure to stretch slowly and carefully as overstretching may cause injury or may cause laxity to prolong even after birth, which may produce higher injury rates after pregnancy.
- **Growth hormones** are present in order to support the development of the foetus. These pass through mother's own blood supply and can actually help to enhance strength gains during pregnancy by incorporating resistance exercises in one's exercise programme.



# IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR PARTICIPATION

- When exercising, a pregnant woman should wear clothes that are unrestrictive, loose fitting (preferably natural fibres e.g. cotton).
- Must never overheat, as this affects the baby. Be sure there is adequate ventilation. Keep hydrated.
- It's advisable for a pregnant woman to eat something light before exercising to prevent hypoglycaemia.
- The pregnant woman must be guided and encouraged never to go beyond her capacity. Overstretching can be dangerous because stretched ligaments and tendons, unlike muscles, will not revert to their original size.



# SPECIAL ATTENTION ON SQUATTING

- Squatting regularly helps to increase the mobility of the hip joints and will help bring the pelvis into the right postural position in relation to the spine.
- Regular practice will assist in labour and having a natural birth.
- Avoid full squatting: If the woman has had a cervical stitch or haemorrhoids or severe painful varicose veins in her legs. Instead do squatting with a ball for short periods unless pain is felt in this position.



# GENERAL CAUTIONS IN PREGNANCY

- If the pregnant woman has varicose veins, stay away from exercises that cut off circulation or put excessive strain on the veins e.g. avoid standing poses held for long periods of time.
- Work carefully around the knee joints, using appropriate props to prevent pain, especially if there has been a previous injury.
- **NB: Do not take on pregnant women who are considered high risk e.g. threatening miscarriage, or with a chronic condition especially lower back and pelvis.**



# GENERAL CAUTIONS IN PREGNANCY

- A pregnant woman should be encouraged to listen to her body at all times, and never to do anything that causes unnecessary or inappropriate discomfort.
- Short-term ache in pregnant woman's belly is normal. Severe cramping is not. Nor is bleeding from the vagina, fever, chills, light-headedness, faintness or excessive discharge from the vagina. Action must be taken and she must contact her doctor or caregiver.
- If you are taking on a new private client, it is recommended that you get a letter of medical consent for her to exercise. **PAR med-X for PREGNANCY** is a convenient checklist for use by health care providers to evaluate pregnant patients who want to enter a prenatal fitness programme.



## PARmed-X for Pregnancy - Health Evaluation Form

(to be completed and given to the pre / postnatal fitness professional after obtaining medical clearance to exercise)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME),  
have discussed my plans to participate in physical activity during my current pregnancy with my health care provider and I have obtained his/her approval to begin participation.

SIGNED

DATE

Your health care providers comments:

### Important Information:

Please advise us before commencing any session if, for any reason, your health or ability to exercise changes.

If you are pregnant, we strongly recommend that you check with your doctor/midwife at regular intervals (perhaps at your antenatal check ups) if it is still ok for you to exercise.

If you are in doubt about the suitability of the exercises, please refer back to your medical practitioner. The teacher can accept no liability for personal injury related to participation in a session if:

- Your doctor has not given you medical clearance to exercise/to continue to exercise
- You fail to observe instructions on safety and technique
- Such injury is caused by the negligence of another participant in the class/studio

The exercises and the transitions between exercises, should be performed at a pace which feels comfortable for you. Please tell the teacher if you feel any discomfort, dizziness, nausea or pain during the session. Please also inform the teacher if you feel discomfort or pain after a previous session.