



TIPS FOR BACK AND PELVIC PAINS DURING PREGNANCY

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POSTURE AND MOVING

- Try as much as possible to avoid sliding and/or twisting movements of the pelvic joints (pubic bone / sacrum connection = SI joint):
- Learn about the natural position of the back and pelvis.
- Get to know your movements and feel how your back and pelvis behave during those movements.

USE OF MUSCLES

- The pelvic girdle muscles, especially the buttocks-, pelvic floor-, abdominal- and back muscles can provide your pelvis with significant support. We call it the muscle corset. Put the initial strain on this muscle corset if you want to move from a resting position (also in bed) and then proceed to move. This way puts less stress on the ligaments and joints. You will avoid pain while moving and you feel more 'stable' and secure. As an exercise, you can regularly stretch and relax the muscle corset in various positions.

STANDING

- Place your feet slightly apart, in a width comfortable for you.
- Carry your weight on both legs and slightly more in the heels. You can stabilize yourself by balancing from one leg to the other using the buttock muscles. Do not keep standing still!
- Do not stand on one leg with a slouched hip.
- Do not overstretch your knees.
- Make sure you try to keep your pelvis symmetrical instead of 'pulling it inwards'. Stretch your back using the broader back muscles and 'lift yourself away' from the pelvis.

SITTING

- Sit straight up and do not slouch down on the pelvis. (helpful with this can be placing a pillow behind the back)
- Make sure you place both feet on the ground to ensure a good position for the legs, and directly below the knees with legs bent at a 90 degrees angle (do not put pressure on the inner thighs). Alternatively, cross both legs under the seat and lean slightly forward thus positioning your pelvis above your upper legs. This also works well on a slightly higher chair. Note: Placing one leg over the other is fine but you must make sure the knee is facing outward and you do not move the pelvis.
- Sit down as much as possible while dressing and undressing.
- A skippy ball works as an alternative seat (but of course not while dressing or undressing).
- A handy solution for the relaxation of the inner thighs is sitting cross-legged on a low stool or a few phone books.

GETTING UP AND SITTING DOWN

- Place your feet next to each other firmly on the ground and rise using your leg muscles from the hips and a straight back. Thereby pushing yourself up by placing your hands on your upper legs or on the armrests. The shoulders must be kept in a low position with the broad back muscles. And keep breathing!
- For walking, first stabilise the pelvis with the buttock muscles.

GETTING INTO AND OUT OF BED

Start with sitting on the edge of the bed. Lie down in one motion with the support of your arm.

For getting out roll onto your side and push yourself up with your arm while keeping your back straight until you are positioned on the edge of the bed.

LYING DOWN

When lying down, the side position is preferred: the legs arched and placed on top of each other, the feet as an extension of the pelvis. The upper legs should be positioned horizontal as much as possible or slightly higher. You can discover which position is most comfortable for you by placing a pillow between the knees or maybe the ankles. Do not forget to try out how thick the pillow should be.

Support to the back can be provided by placing a pillow or rolled up towel under the bump. Gravity will this way ensure that the spine and pelvis are stabilized. Apply this resting position during breaks during the day (E.g. take an exercise mat to work!)

You may, if this is comfortable, rest on your back. To ensure a good position for the spine and pelvis, place a pillow under the thighs and a rolled up towel under your lower back to prevent the pelvis from 'slouching'.

Do not put pressure on your inner thighs and temporarily remove the pillow from between your legs. You can also roll over by 'going under'. Push off against the mattress with both arms and gently position yourself on all fours and relax back onto the bed on your other side.

A practical tip: smooth sheets and smooth nightwear (silk or satin) cause less resistance when moving in bed.

WALKING

- Do not walk too far and / or too long and take small steps. Exercise the legs well! Do not space your legs too far apart and / or walk slowly, otherwise you are putting too much pressure on one leg!
- Try to remember the back stretching exercises.

CLIMBING STAIRS

- Keep the climbing of stairs to a minimum. This is of course hard to avoid when e.g. you go shopping in town. But just for the fun of it, count how often every day you climb stairs unnecessarily!
- The best way to climb stairs is to slightly bend through the hips. Walk astride while going up and down (keep going). So you can use strength from the legs and keep the back straight and the pelvis still. If necessary, use the handrail.

LIFTING, BENDING DOWN, CARRYING

- Try and keep lifting to a minimum (e.g., have shopping delivered at home).
- Never lift with your back twisted; always straight ahead and keep close to your body
- When bending down once again use the strength of your legs and keep building back and pelvis as a whole.
- Make sure weight is equally distributed to both sides to your body.

CYCLING

At this time you might find cycling easier than walking! Make sure the cycling motions come from the legs and that the pelvis remains still. This often requires lowering the saddle which helps with mounting and dismounting.

DRIVING

Do not drive 'from your pelvis'. The position of the seat is thereby very important. Getting in and out of the car you will do from the sitting position. (A plastic bag creates a smooth surface).

IMPORTANT

- Spread out your activities and energy as much as possible throughout the day; fit in regular resting breaks.

MATERNITY SUPPORT BELT

A pelvic belt can be a nice addition. This supports your abdomen and relieves the pressure on your pelvis.

However, this also relieves your muscle corset, so do not wear it continuously. Alternate throughout the day.

There are various types available. Therefore it is advisable to discuss with a specialist if these are suitable for you.

In case of persistent and / or worsening back and pelvic complaints, you can contact without referral a physiotherapist specialised in pelvic issues and pregnancy; these are present in almost every practice.