

Exercise during pregnancy to have healthy babies

The writer has posted comments on this article ANI | Jul 17, 2013, 06.27 PM IST

Exercise during pregnancy to have healthy babies
(Thinkstock photos/Getty Images)

A new study has found that moderate-intensity exercise three times a week during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy halves the risk of having a high birth weight newborn (babies with macrosomia, that is, weighing over 4 kilos) and, therefore, the risk of needing a caesarean delivery.

These findings come from research led by Ruben Barakat of the [Polytechnic University of Madrid](#), Alejandro Lucia of the European University of Madrid, and Jonatan Ruiz of the University of Granada.

Together with [Sports Science](#) graduates, they ran a series of programmed training sessions for a sample of 510 sedentary pregnant women.

The researchers contacted a total of 780 Spanish pregnant [women](#) attending two primary health care centres in Leganes (Madrid). Finally, 510 gave their consent to participate in the study.

They all recognized they were sedentary—that is, that they exercised for less than 20 minutes on fewer than 3 days a week.

The intervention group followed a training program that consisted of 55 minute sessions of aerobic, muscle strength and flexibility exercises on three days a week from weeks 10-12 to weeks 38-39 of pregnancy, while the control group received standard recommendations and care.

The results showed the training sessions did not reduce the appearance of [gestational diabetes](#) mellitus but did diminish the incidence of two major associated risks: macrosomia (down by 58 per cent) and caesarean delivery (which fell by 34 per cent).

These findings "reinforce the need to encourage more supervised exercise interventions during pregnancy to combat the negative effects of gestational diabetes mellitus", Jonatan Ruiz, researcher in the University of Granada Department of Physical and Sports Education and corresponding author of the study, said.

The study is published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Share your views

