

GUIDE

Prenatal yoga basics: what is safe and what to avoid

Evidence-based prenatal yoga guidance from ACOG on exercise, heat, positions and warning signs.

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Contents

The headline guidance 5

Position and heat rules that matter for yoga .. 5

Warning signs: stop and call your ob-gyn .. 5

Choosing a prenatal class 5

Prenatal yoga adapts yoga for pregnancy. The guidance below comes from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), fetched on 2026-11-13. ACOG's exercise FAQ was last updated in September 2024 and reviewed in November 2025.

The headline guidance

If your pregnancy is healthy and normal, ACOG says it is safe to continue or start regular physical activity, and that exercise does not increase the risk of miscarriage, low birth weight or early delivery. Ideally, aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week; ACOG counts modified yoga and modified Pilates among the safest exercises for pregnant women. Always discuss exercise with your obstetrician–gynecologist first.

Position and heat rules that matter for yoga

ACOG's precautions apply directly to a yoga class:

- **Avoid overheating.** Exercise in a temperature-controlled room, wear loose clothing and drink water before, during and after. ACOG tells pregnant women not to exercise outside in very hot or humid weather.
- **Skip hot yoga.** ACOG lists "hot yoga" and "hot Pilates" among exercises to avoid during pregnancy.
- **Avoid lying flat on your back** for long periods, and avoid standing still for long periods. Both can reduce blood flow.
- **Skip jerky, bouncy or high-impact movements.** Pregnancy hormones relax the ligaments that support your joints, which raises the risk of injury.
- **No contact or fall-risk sports.** The same logic rules out anything where you could be hit in the abdomen or fall.

Warning signs: stop and call your ob-gyn

ACOG's list: vaginal bleeding, dizziness or faintness, shortness of breath before you start, chest pain, headache, muscle weakness, calf pain or swelling, regular painful contractions, or fluid leaking from the vagina.

Choosing a prenatal class

Look for a class labelled prenatal or pregnancy yoga, and tell the teacher you are pregnant and how far along you are. Yoga Journal (updated 2026-11-12) describes prenatal yoga as emphasising breathing, pelvic floor work, restorative poses and core strength. Choose a teacher who offers modifications and welcomes questions. If you have any pregnancy complication, follow your ob-gyn's advice over any general guidance.

Frequently asked questions

Is yoga safe during pregnancy?

Yes for most healthy pregnancies. ACOG says it is safe to continue or start regular physical activity if your pregnancy is normal, and lists modified yoga as one of the safest exercises. Talk to your ob-gyn first.

Can I do hot yoga while pregnant?

No. ACOG lists hot yoga and hot Pilates among activities to avoid during pregnancy because they can overheat you.

Sources

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