

Fitness Tips

Abdominal Pulse

By Robin Resnick, Elite Personal Fitness

The abdominal pulse is one of the three most essential exercises for your pregnancy fitness routine. It is also a basic building block for other exercises you do in your prenatal workout.

Before doing any abdominal exercises, you should check for diastasis recti (a painless separation between the left and right side of the rectus abdominis muscle).

To check for diastasis recti, begin by lying on your back with your knees bent & feet on the floor. Lift your head off the floor, and with your fingertips, measure the width of the separation between the muscles. If you can fit more than two fingers in the muscle gap, you have a diastasis recti, and should modify the exercises. Diastasis recti can be caused by weak abdominal muscles that are stretched by the growing uterus.

To modify stomach exercises, hold or wrap your hands or a towel around the sides or your belly to pull the abdominal and oblique muscles toward the midlines as your crunch. Strengthening your abdominals will help rectify this condition.

To do the abdominal pulse – sit against a wall or on a bed with your legs crossed, or on a chair with your hands on your stomach. Inhale and let your lungs expand with air. Relax your abs. Exhale and contract the abdominals tightly by pulling them in. Repeat 10 to 50 times for 2 sets. In late pregnancy, you might need to lift your arms out to the side to accomplish this.