

Training for Two

Pregnancy Considerations for the Elite Athlete

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THE CORE IDEA

The body you start pregnancy with is the body that competes for two.

PRECONCEPTION 01

Build the Foundation

OPTIMIZE FIRST

- Menstrual cycle is a vital sign — irregular cycles signal RED-S.
- Fix energy deficits before trying to conceive.
- Preconception MFM consult: CBC + iron, DEXA, injury + med review.
- Document baseline: VO₂ max, strength, movement quality.

DAILY TARGETS

- Folic acid 0.4 mg (start a prenatal vitamin before conception)
- Vitamin D 1,000–2,000 IU if deficient
- Calcium 1,000 mg · Iron 27 mg
- Fish 8–12 oz/week low-mercury

FERTILITY TIMELINE

- Under 35 → 12 months of active trying
- 35 or older → 6 months of active trying

PREGNANCY 02

Adapt — don't abandon

WHAT CHANGES

- Blood volume +40%; cardiac output +30–50%
- Lower vascular resistance → early lightheadedness
- Ligamentous laxity (relaxin, estrogen) → injury risk

FUEL & HYDRATE

- +340 kcal/day (2nd tri) · +450 kcal/day (3rd tri)
- Protein 1.1 g/kg floor · athletes 1.4–1.8 g/kg
- Fluids +300–500 mL/day; more in heat / long sessions
- Caffeine < 200 mg/day — count pre-workouts & gels

TRAIN BY FEEL

- Use RPE, not fixed HR zones. Target RPE 3–6 for most work.
- Keep core temp < 38°C; avoid overheating (esp. early).
- Modify sport-specific drills trimester by trimester.

AVOID

- Contact sports · skydiving · fall-risk activities
- Hot yoga / hot Pilates · scuba diving
- Altitude > 6,000 ft if not acclimated

POSTPARTUM 03

Return to Power

RECOVERY IS PHASED

- 0–2 wks — acute healing; rest, walking, pelvic floor
- 2–6 wks — tissue repair; mobility, breathing, core
- 6–12 wks — reconditioning; progressive load
- 12+ wks — return to sport; impact reintroduction

CLEARANCE ≠ READY

- “6-week clearance” = no complications, not “ready to sprint.”
- Return is symptom-guided, individualized to delivery + goals.
- Care team: MFM, pelvic-floor PT, sports medicine.

PELVIC FLOOR & CORE

- Leakage is common but not normal - evaluate it.
- Screen for prolapse before impact training.
- Diastasis recti: focus on function, not gap width.

NURSING ATHLETE

- +500 kcal/day · +1 L fluids/day
- Protein 1.5–2.0 g/kg/day
- Train ≈ 1 hr after a feed to reduce discomfort.

⚠️ RED FLAGS

Stop exercise · call your OB

- Vaginal bleeding (any amount)
- Regular, painful contractions (esp. < 37 wks)
- Dizziness or syncope
- Decreased fetal movement (after 28 wks)

RESOURCES

[Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine \(High Risk Pregnancy Info\)](#)
[La Leche League \(Breastfeeding\)](#)
[KellyMom \(Breastfeeding\)](#)
[Postpartum Support International \(Mental Health\)](#) 1-800-944-4773

CONTACT

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