Exercise classes when pregnant should:

- ensure the instructor has additional training on exercise in pregnancy
- have sessions start with a warm-up and a cool-down
- not encourage participants to hold their breath—exhale on exertion and inhale on relaxation
- encourage participants to monitor their heart rate
- include both aerobic and muscle strengthening exercises
- emphasize correct posture with all movements and positions
- ensure abdominal strengthening exercises are not done lying on your back (very important after 16 weeks)
- avoid bouncing
- keep room temperature cooler

You may also consider:

- a program that is conveniently located near work or home
- if child care is available
- if the cost of the program is reasonable or are subsidies available
- if needs of different cultures are accommodated
- if a trial period is available

Participants should complete a PARmed-X for Pregnancy (see: www.csep.ca/en/publications) assessment with their health care provider

For more information:
Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services
519-575-4400 (TTY 519-575-4608)
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/physicalactivity
Always talk with your health care provider about your activity level during pregnancy

Be active before you become pregnant to:

• maintain a healthy weight
• make getting pregnant easier
• contribute to a healthier pregnancy
• promote a healthy weight gain during pregnancy
• reduce stress and tension and increase your energy levels
• reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and some forms of cancer

Stay active while you are pregnant to:

• improve how you feel about yourself, your health and your changing body
• manage some pregnancy discomforts
• promote healthy weight gain
• decrease your risk for developing diabetes and high blood pressure during pregnancy
• make labour and birth easier

Continue to be active after your baby is born to:

• improve your energy level
• improve how you feel about yourself
• promote a return to a healthy weight
• maintain muscle strength for lifting
• encourage active living in children
• reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and some forms of cancer

Staying motivated:

• choose activities you like to do
• vary the activities you do
• be active with family and friends
• build it into your daily routine
• use a calendar, phone app or pedometer to record steps, time or distance
• drink water before, during and after activity
• eat a light snack before being active
• wear a supportive bra and comfortable footwear
• avoid overheating. Dress in layers
• listen to your body!
• do the “Talk Test”—if you cannot carry on a conversation, you are working too hard

Starting activity when pregnant:

• choose non-weight bearing or low-impact activities (e.g., swimming, walking, etc.)
• start with a 5–10 minute warm-up
• begin with 10–15 minutes of continuous exercise 3 times per week
• increase slowly to 30-minute sessions 4 times per week
• end with a 5–10 minute cool-down

Target heart rate zones for pregnancy:¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fitness level</th>
<th>Age 20–29</th>
<th>Age 30–39</th>
<th>40 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fit</td>
<td>145–160</td>
<td>140–156</td>
<td>125–140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>135–150</td>
<td>135–145</td>
<td>125–140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfit</td>
<td>129–144</td>
<td>128–144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight/ Obese</td>
<td>102–124</td>
<td>101–120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If under 20 years old and active, range is 140–155 beats per minute