

## Chapter Three **Exercise**

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### **Regular Physical Exercise**

- Increases stamina for labor and birth
- Helps you to be aware of your body

Do all exercise slowly and with control.

Be careful of balance, avoid risk of abdominal trauma, avoid becoming dehydrated, stop before exhaustion, and avoid anything that hurts.

Consult your birth team with any questions!

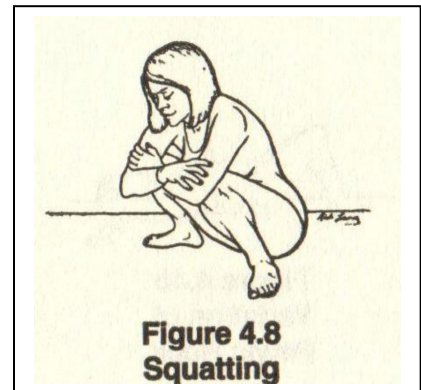
1. Choose a form of exercise you are used to doing regularly. Modify it for pregnancy.
2. Swimming reduces pressure on legs and pelvis and can help swollen feet or ankles.
3. Walking is an excellent form of exercise that almost anyone can do! Long reflective walks reduce stress, help digestion, and help to align your spine in a natural and rhythmical way.

### Tailor Sitting

- Encourages the uterus to move forward
- Increases circulation
- Stretches the inner thighs

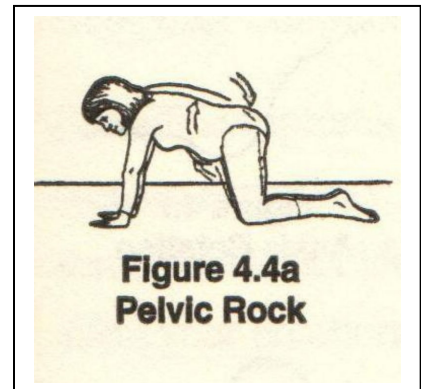
### Squatting

- Imitate this position for giving birth
- Natural pressure on uterus and prevents arching of back (which interferes with pushing)
- Shortens birth canal by 10%
- Shortens second stage labor
- Prepares leg muscle
- Prepares the perineum



### Pelvic Rocking

- More benefits than any other pregnancy exercise
- Tones and conditions muscles of lower back and abdomen
- Relieves pressure on lower back, major blood vessels, ureters, and bladder
- Increases circulation
- Relieves tension
- Improves digestion
- Helps baby come forward out of pelvis

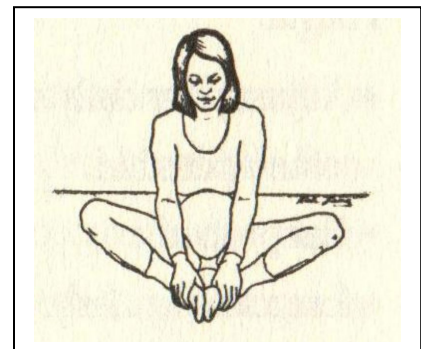


### Butterflies

- Tones and conditions abductor muscles
- Enables you to pull your legs back more comfortably in second stage labor
- Reduces shaking of legs after birth and unnecessary pain

### Kegels

- Tones the pubococcygeus muscle (pelvic floor)
- Prevents incontinence or wetting pants after sneezing or coughing
- Reduces discomfort
- Promotes sensation during intimacy
- Prevents unusual pain during birth
- Prevents premature flexion of baby's head
- Shortens second stage labor
- Prevents damage to PC muscle



### Side Relaxation and Sleep Position

- Provides a safe and comfortable position for sleep and labor
- Helps circulation
- Allows the bed to support the baby's weight
- Reduces stress or strain on body parts during labor, so that the uterus can work unencumbered

## Homework

Walking:

Tailor Sitting:

Squatting:

Pelvic Rocking:

Butterflies:

Kegels:

Side Relaxation: