Fitness Programming for Expectant and Breastfeeding Mothers

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Abstract

Whether or not and how physical activity affects women reproductive health has been a controversial issue for many decades. Before 1985 there were no medical guidelines for exercise during pregnancy and the traditional medical view was to advice pregnant women not to exercise at all. Since then much research on the relationship between pregnancy and childbirth has led to the current view that exercise during pregnancy often benefits the mother and possibly the fetus as well. The medical profession and the society in general prevented from participating in sporting activities because it might compromise their potential as future mothers. For instance jumping was cautioned against as it was thought it was capable of displacing the womb and cause reproductive abnormalities. Up to 1992 women would not participate in triple jump at the Olympics

The medical profession and the society were basing their argument on myths and theories. Modern medicine appreciates that both expectant and breast-feeding mothers need exercise for good health. The purpose of this paper is to give guidelines for a fitness programme for expectant and breastfeeding mothers.

Key words: Reproductive health, expectant mother, breastfeeding, Physical activity.