

## Baby in the Boardroom : How to Juggle the Demands of Pregnancy and Your Job

Largely because of the huge financial impact of bringing a child into the world, more women are now choosing to work well into the last trimester of their pregnancy. But financial reasons aside, many women place equal importance to their careers as they do their families, believing that they can fulfill the roles of mother, wife and career woman all at the same time. In fact, some women continue working until they actually deliver their baby. This is a departure from the old practice of women resigning immediately after finding out that she is pregnant, which for many years is believed to be one of the reasons why women should not advance as high as their male counterparts do in the workplace hierarchy.

The truth is, it's not impossible for a woman to continue working during pregnancy, as long as she remains healthy during this period. However, this can present some challenges especially since pregnancy has its share of aches and pains. Take morning sickness, for example. Its name may be misleading some women into thinking that it only strikes at a particular time of day, but the feeling of nausea may actually threaten to overwhelm a pregnant woman at any given time of the day especially during the first trimester, but it may continue throughout the pregnancy. Women are also more easily tired and uncomfortable as their bodies cope with the increasing demands of carrying the baby, and the stress of being pregnant is often aggravated by job stress. Certain work conditions may also aggravate job stress or be dangerous for both mother and unborn child such as frequent shift changes, strenuous physical tasks, hot or cold working environments, long commutes, prolonged standing, repetitive lifting of heavy objects, heavy vibrations such as from large machines and exposure to harmful substances.

Even if the job doesn't present any obvious threat, there will still be a need to make some changes to a pregnant woman's working conditions. These changes must be made to ensure the continuing good health of both mother and child. Here are some ideas that the pregnant woman may want to follow for a trouble-free pregnancy at work:

I Avoid anything that may trigger an attack of nausea, and drink plenty of fluids. Keep a supply of crackers, bottled water, hard candy, lemon drops, ginger ale, ginger tea and other bland foods handy in the office to help ease the nausea in case it attacks.

I Pregnant women tire easily, with their energy level fluctuating throughout the day. During this time it is extremely important that a woman gets an adequate amount of sleep at night and opportunity to take short, frequent breaks during the day to recharge. This may mean rethinking your work schedule and scaling back on activities both inside and outside the home such as doing chores. It may also help if you have a comfortable chair and enough pillows to support your back, and a place to put your feet up.

I Exercise does wonders during pregnancy, because it greatly improves your overall health and wellbeing. It boosts mood, enhances the quality of sleep, reduces pregnancy aches and pains, and prepares you for childbirth by strengthening muscles and building endurance. This is especially important because during pregnancy and childbirth, a woman's body is subjected to a great deal of stress. Exercise also makes it much easier to get back in shape after your baby's born, and helps ease constipation, backache, fatigue, varicose veins, circulation problems and other health issues related to pregnancy. The most recommended exercises for pregnant women are walking, swimming, yoga, stretching, and low-impact aerobics. Pelvic exercises called Kegel exercises are also beneficial to the expectant mother, helping to strengthen the pelvic floor. The pelvic floor muscles support the uterus, bowel, and bladder; these body parts are put under pressure during pregnancy and childbirth.

I Bending and lifting. Proper form can spare your back, even if you're lifting something light. Bend at your knees, not your waist. Keep the load close to your body, lifting with your legs — not your back. Avoid twisting your body while lifting. If a load is too heavy to handle easily, ask for help.

### About the Author

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