

prenatal & postnatal pilates

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When Carrie Chavez started practicing private Pilates, she thought it would increase her flexibility. She didn't anticipate all the benefits she (and her future baby) would discover by adding Pilates into her exercise routine.

Always active, Carrie participated in gymnastics, cheer, and dance while in school. She continued to take dance-inspired classes like PRObarre and strength-based classes like TRX, as well engaging in a lot of outdoor cardio. After attending a Pilates Mat class to increase flexibility and the mind-body connection, she was drawn to private Pilates by instructor Staci Stratton.

"I was surprised by how good the workout was," says Carrie. "Pilates doesn't get boring because there's always something new to practice. You can tell you're getting better and see the results in your body. I would always leave Pilates class feeling fewer aches and pains and having lots of energy."

A few weeks into her new routine, Carrie discovered that she was pregnant.

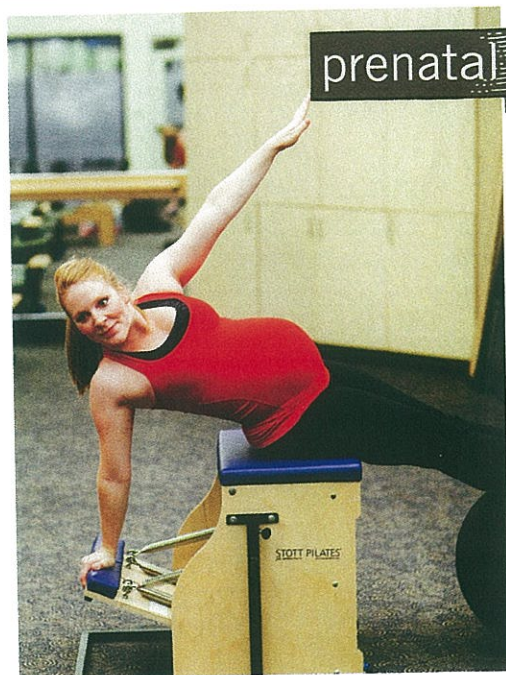
Veteran instructor Beth Lippman endorses prenatal Pilates for several reasons. It keeps the body active without elevating the heart rate too much. It increases spinal health and improves posture, which can become an issue during pregnancy. However, Beth recommends getting your doctor's permission before starting prenatal Pilates.

Since Carrie had already started her Pilates routine, her doctor recommended she continue her sessions throughout her pregnancy. She attended Pilates up until five days before giving birth!

Carrie said her instructor, Staci, was excellent at fine-tuning her routine to accommodate her pregnancy, while still ensuring a good workout. "The exercises focused on muscles used in labor and helped with back pain and other discomforts of pregnancy," she says. "All the nurses commented on how fast my labor went considering it was my first baby. They thought that staying active played a role. The breathwork and focus I gained from Pilates came naturally during labor and helped tremendously."

Carrie also bounced back quickly after the delivery as she continued Pilates.

Beth highly recommends postnatal Pilates (even if you haven't practiced during pregnancy) after obtaining your doctor's permission. "Start postnatal Pilates about six weeks after labor," says Beth. "It's a great way to get back your pelvic floor and abdominal strength. There has even been a lot of success with diastasis recti (abdominal separation) after pregnancy."



"By taking care of myself I believe I'm a better mom," says Carrie. "I'll have the energy to keep up with my son and I look forward to playing sports with him. I think that staying healthy, feeling good about myself, and practicing good habits will help shape who he becomes."