

## General principles to keep in mind when working out and pregnant:

- Consult your doctor before beginning any workout. PHYSIQUE 57 is a low impact workout that uses your own body weight for resistance. Proper alignment and controlled movements are the basis of our workout, and therefore it is healthy for your joints and creates an overall strong and flexible body. **Physique Prenatal** was voted the **best prenatal workout** by New York Magazine!
- Be sure to remind the instructor before each class that you are pregnant so that they can assist you. Additionally, please provide a doctor's note of approval to the front desk.
- Focus on your breathing, listen to your body, and allow yourself to take breaks when you feel you need to.
- Keep your head above your heart- inversions are not recommended during pregnancy as they may disrupt normal circulatory functions.
- Keep your arms shoulder level and below to keep your heart beating at a reasonable rate. Some pregnant women use heart rate monitors to stay on top of their heart rate. Your doctor can advise specific parameters for you to follow.
- Focus on keeping the movements in a range of motion where they are slow and controlled. With hormone fluctuations during pregnancy your body may seem loose and unstable. The PHYSIQUE 57 technique develops stability throughout every segment of class. Specific areas of the body are isolated with controlled movements while proper alignment and posture are maintained throughout the rest of your body.

## Enjoy the movement and reap the benefits!

- **Improved posture**- with the weight of the baby pulling you forward, pregnant women often develop kyphosis, or rounded shoulders. Focus on keeping your chest lifted and shoulders back and you will stand tall and look more elegant!
- **Decrease lower back pain**- the pelvis tilts forward as the baby grows and the lower back can often suffer the consequences with exaggerated lordosis, or sway back. With improved posture and our stability and strengthening exercises that work the deep abdominal muscles and obliques, you can greatly improve lower back health during pregnancy.
- **Increase pelvic stability**- PHYSIQUE 57 strengthens all of the muscle groups surrounding your pelvis including your gluteal muscles, hamstrings, inner thighs, outer thighs, obliques, and pelvic floor. This will help you feel more confident and solid on your feet as you go about your day.
- **Boost your circulation**- with increased blood volume and a more sedentary lifestyle, blood can pool in the ankles and lower extremities and cause swelling and discomfort. All of our lower body movements greatly improve circulation and will reduce these side effects.
- **Preparation for labor and delivery**- our controlled hip movements, upright weight bearing thigh and seat sequences, and focused abdominal series will strengthen your pelvic floor which is where you will push from during labor and delivery.
- **Develop your upper body strength**- after your baby is born you will have a lot to carry around and hold. Be prepared so that you can comfortably enjoy these precious moments!
- **Stretch to feel great**- in addition to maintaining your overall strength, a body that is in a constant state of change needs to be stretched to be functional and feel healthy.
- **Reap the psychological benefits**- it is important to take time to care for yourself during this busy period. When you are so focused on the future it is easy to lose track of the present. Physical activity is the perfect way to relieve stress and you will benefit from post-workout endorphins. Not only will you look healthy and strong but you will feel fantastic!

# Prenatal Variations *for the* PHYSIQUE 57 classes:

## Warm Up

- **Knee lifts**- find your focus and listen to your body. Pace yourself, slow down the tempo and keep your arms below shoulder level.
- **Weights**- pregnancy is a time to focus on maintaining your strength. While we do not recommend increasing to heavier weights, you may continue as you are accustomed.
- **Push Up/ Plank series**- this series may be done at the barre. If on the floor, rest between each set to allow your heart rate to descend and to refresh your form.
- **Push Ups**- may modify on the thighs or use push-up stands to allow more room for belly
- **Plank leg lifts**- may lower the supporting knee to the floor for stability
- **Forearm plank**- hips may be lifted higher as the baby grows
- **Tricep dips**- hold on to heavy weights to support wrists; step feet wider for stability

## Thighs

- **Posture**- think of hugging your abdominals around the baby to engage your core strength; keep your chest lifted and shoulders down
- **Breathe**- focus on keeping your breath steady, take breaks when needed, and stay hydrated
- **Pacing**- keep movements slow and controlled
- **Ball placement**- put the ball directly between your knees to ensure joint stability
- **Wider feet provide a more stable base**- step the feet apart in positions with the legs together
- **Knee level**- keep your positions higher and focus on proper form
- **Leg Lifts instead of Thigh Dancing**- lift each leg 20-30 times at the barre
- **Thigh stretches**- place both hands inside your front leg during the lunge and hamstring stretch to allow room for your belly; push-up stands may be used if you have trouble reaching the ground
- **Pigeon stretch**- instead of a split, lower down to a pigeon with your front leg bent in a 90 degree angle and your back leg extended and parallel. This is a great comprehensive hip stretch to do every day along with any other stretches in this series and can help improve lower back health!

## Seat

- **Keep your head above your heart**- do Standing Split holding the barre with your head lifted
- **Focus on abdominal support**- keep the movements small and controlled
- **Lower back stability**- lengthen through the lower back and keep the working leg low
- **Lift out of your supporting hip** - shake out your leg and reset your position as needed
- **Wedge**- all side-lying seat work should be done on the mat positioned on the obtuse angle

## Abdominals and Back series

- **Purpose** - it is important for the abdominals to be strong enough to support the growth of the baby, but flexible enough to allow the belly to grow. Doing the right kind of ab work is essential.
- **Stability**- all abdominal exercises should focus on stabilization- lightly hug around the baby from hip point to hip point
- **Breath** - focus on keeping your breath easy- inhale as you extend, exhale on the exertion
- **Keep these exercises light and gentle** - take breaks and reset as needed
- **Flat Back and Round Back:**
  - **Wedge** - flip the wedge over so the right angle sits flush with the wall under the barre
  - Lie down with your head resting at the top edge of the mat
  - Always keep your head down, using your lower body to gently challenge your abs
  - **Flat Back** - hold the band 2/3 down
  - **Round Back**- press the ball under the barre
  - Use one leg at a time - you may keep one foot down on the ground for support. If both legs are lifted- keep your legs high, the movements small, and one leg always coming towards you.
  - Darting movements may also be done with both feet on the floor
  - These are excellent exercises to develop deep core strength, stretch the lower back, and improve circulation!
- **Curl:**
  - Sit higher on your wedge so that your shoulders are just off the top edge of the mat
  - Keep your torso stable - refrain from pulsing your chest forward. Gently challenge your abs by moving your arms and / or legs.
  - Oblique sets - you may take a mild twist, reaching your hand just above your opposite knee
  - Shorten this series- as the movements become complicated in the finale, rest and do kegels, pelvic tucks, or upper body exercises with a set of 2 or 3 lb. weights
- **Back Dancing** - position yourself with your shoulders at the bottom edge of your wedge for tucks
- **Back Extension** - come to an all 4's position and extend opposite arm and leg

## Final Stretches

- Pelvic Floor stretch rather than Prone (upper back bend while lying on the front on the body) - from all 4's, move your hands 6 inches forward and slowly circle your torso on a horizontal plane to stretch your pelvic floor from all angles
- Lie with your shoulders at the bottom edge of your wedge for all back lying stretches
- Always transition gracefully between stretches, focus on your breath, and restore balance in your body and ease in your mind.