

THIRD TRIMESTER

Gentle exercises to ease third-trimester swelling

Simple, seated exercises to improve circulation and reduce third-trimester swelling. No equipment needed, just a few minutes and a comfortable spot to sit.

A free guide from maternity.app

Swollen ankles and puffy feet are totally normal in the third trimester, but they don't have to slow you down. These gentle exercises can help you feel more comfortable as you get closer to meeting your baby.

Movement keeps swelling in check.

Light activity improves circulation and reduces fluid retention. You don't need a workout, just a few intentional movements throughout the day.

Try these anytime moves.

- ☐ **Ankle circles.** Sit comfortably and rotate each ankle slowly 10 times clockwise, then counterclockwise.
- ☐ **Toe taps.** Lift and lower your toes while keeping heels on the floor (like a gentle drum tap). Do 20 reps.
- ☐ **Calf pumps.** While seated, press balls of feet down to lift heels, then lower. Repeat 15 times.
- ☐ **Side leg lifts.** Lie on your side and slowly lift your top leg 10 times, then switch sides.
- ☐ **Mini walks.** Take a 5-minute stroll every hour if you've been sitting for a while.
- ☐ **Elevate your feet.** After activity, prop your legs up above heart level for 10-15 minutes.

When to take it extra easy.

- **Heat days.** Skip outdoor movement if it's over 85°F, swelling worsens in high temps.
- **After long sits.** Stand up slowly and wiggle toes before walking to avoid lightheadedness.
- **If pain joins swelling.** Sharp pain or redness means stop and call your provider.

WATER HELPS WATER RETENTION

It sounds backward, but drinking more water actually reduces swelling. Aim for small sips every 30 minutes instead of large glasses less often.

Your body is doing hard work.

Swelling peaks in late afternoon and improves overnight. Be patient with yourself, you're growing a whole new person while keeping yourself moving.