

Prepare body and mind to optimise fertility

Getting pregnant can be a frustrating and emotionally draining experience for many women and men wanting to start a family. Here, author **Dr Attilio D'Alberto** gives some key advice on how to prepare your body, mind and soul for optimal fertility...



IF YOU want to become pregnant, or have been trying for some time, here are some useful tips that can help you prepare your body, mind and soul to optimise your fertility.



> **Dr Attilio D'Alberto**

■ BODY

1. Check your weight

Being either overweight or underweight can damage your fertility.

Both are counterproductive so make sure your weight is within a healthy range.

If you are underweight (less than 22% body fat), it can mean your oestrogen levels may be lower than normal, which can cause infertility.

Eating regularly and reducing exercise will help to recover body fat levels, improving the body's health and your fertility.

If you think you are overweight, measure your waist/hip ratio.

This is done by dividing your waist measurement by your hip measurement. Do not use body mass index (BMI) as this is out of date.

If your waist/hip ratio is 0.8 or higher, then your fertility would benefit from some weight loss.

2. Don't diet

If you need to lose weight, eat a healthy, balanced diet rather than following a fad diet plan and make sure you do regular exercise.

3. Exercise

Do cardio exercise two to three times a week, plus soft exercises such as yoga, Pilates or tai chi.

Remember, however, that exercise,

like everything else in life, is good only in moderation.

Too little of it causes tiredness, stress and ill-health, whereas exercising too much can reduce the number of eggs a woman has for her fertility.

4. Don't drink more than two glasses of red wine a week (125ml/1.4 units per glass)

Drinking two glasses of red wine a week can reduce stress and regulate hormones.

But be careful to drink no more than two glasses a week.

Other alcoholic drinks, such as spirits, should be avoided, and beer and lager should be drunk in moderation - no more than a couple of bottles a week.

5. Don't smoke or take illegal drugs

Smoking and illegal drugs greatly affect both male and female fertility, therefore it's best not to smoke, or take illegal drugs at all when trying for a baby.

6. Don't have a bath after you ovulate. Have a shower instead

Having a bath after ovulation is a no-no as the heat around the uterus can cause a fertilised embryo to dislodge from the uterus wall, causing an early miscarriage.

However, it's okay to have a bath before you ovulate.

Men also need to be careful how much heat they subject themselves to, especially their groin area.

A man's testicles are outside their bodies to keep them cooler for optimal sperm production.

Excessive heat in the groin area damages sperm production, motility and the DNA within the sperm head.

For these reasons, men should avoid baths altogether and just have warm showers instead.

7. Have a weekly session of acupuncture and take Chinese herbs daily

Acupuncture and a combination of

Chinese herbs can have a beneficial effect upon the body in both men and women and can help to regulate hormone levels and improve fertility.

8. Go to bed at around 10pm and sleep for seven to eight hours.

There is a saying: "Two hours before midnight is worth 10 after".

To enhance your fertility, try not to sleep later than 10pm and sleep for seven to eight hours.

It will take some practice if you're not used to it, but you'll notice how much better you will feel for it.

9. Wear the right footwear and clothing for the season

Being too hot or too cold can have a big impact on your health and fertility. Therefore, make sure you wear appropriate clothes and footwear for each season.

Keep warm in winter - wear thermal underwear, boots and slippers at home.

Keep cool in summer - wear natural fabrics and open sandals.

■ MIND AND SOUL

1. Be positive and use a vision board

A vision board is where you put positive images on to a board for you to look at each day. For example, a positive pregnancy test, you and your partner holding a baby, a cot or a buggy. Looking at these images each day allows you to bring them into your life, to accept them as reality and that they are true to you.

Vision boards are also a useful way of seeing inside yourself and finding any emotional blocks that you might have about having a baby.

2. Practice mindfulness or meditation

Mindfulness and meditation will help you relax, de-stress, focus on the present and slow down your pace of life.

3. Take a break from technology, relax and have fun

As technology has grown with the promise of making our lives easier, we have surrounded ourselves with computers and gadgets, often becoming addicted to them.

Technology may well have made our lives easier in some ways, but a negative side-effect has made us less able to switch off our minds, which makes us stressed, anxious and tired.

Take a break from technology, relax and have fun.

■ **Dr Attilio D'Alberto is the author of My Fertility Guide: How to get pregnant naturally, out now priced £13.49. Also available in Kindle and as an audiobook. For more info see www.attiliodalberto.com**



> **Meditation will help you relax**