



Sacroiliac Joint Pain in Pregnancy

The sacroiliac (SI) joints connect the pelvis to the spine. There is one on the left and one on the right. Under normal conditions, the SI joint has very thick ligaments and musculature that limit its movement to 1-3mm. However, during pregnancy these ligaments can become more flexible due to a hormone called *relaxin*. This makes the SI joint more mobile which can cause pain and discomfort.

Self-Help Management

The aim is to reduce stress on the joint.

It is essential that you tighten the muscles of your pelvic floor and lower abdomen before and during the following activities

Standing	Distribute your weight equally on both legs. Your center of mass should be halfway between your feet.
Walking	Take shorter steps. Avoid hills and stairs if possible.
Getting out of a chair	Use a hard chair at a comfortable height. Put your feet side by side, hands on your knees, and lean your nose over toes to stand up. Avoid standing with a dominant leg taking most of the weight.
Getting out of bed	Roll onto your side if starting from a different position. Place your top hand by your bottom shoulder and use it to push your torso up. At the same time, allow both legs to go off the side of the bed. They will act as a counterweight and help your body to get upright. Sit for a moment before standing up.
Remember to	Sleep with a pillow between the legs. Take rest breaks. Move within the limit of pain.
Avoid	Sitting on soft sofas and chairs. Walking as an exercise. Standing on one leg, carrying a child or laundry basket on one hip.

Pelvic Support Belts

Many women find that a pelvic support belt helps to reduce the discomfort caused by SI joint pain. These come in many forms and getting the correct type and fit is very important.

- Choose a belt that is RIGID. It may have an elastic portion to make the fit tighter, but it should not be stretchy.
- Opt for the MATERNITY version which will be more comfortable under your belly.
- Place the belt BELOW the bony bumps on the front of your hips (anterior superior iliac spine).
- Get it as TIGHT as you can!

Exercise

Several of the “core” and pelvic floor muscles cross the SI joint. See the core handout for details.