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[Teresa Mask](#)

Finding Peace and Strength Through Prenatal Yoga

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When the notice came across my email, I was immediately intrigued – metro Detroit’s first “ongoing” yoga class for expectant mothers. Prenatal yoga?

I know some pregnant women routinely take yoga classes, but that this class specifically for expectant mothers was especially appealing. So, I recruited my friend and colleague Jessica Nunez to join me since our babies were due just four weeks apart.

We had nothing to loose because the first class was free. The place where we attended, [Karma Yoga](#) in Bloomfield Hills, allows any southeast Michigan resident to take any class it offers [free of charge for the first visit](#).

Jessica and I were immediately captivated by the peacefulness of the space. The burning candles calmed us and the soothing music helped us relax. We giddily left that first class, in May, convinced we wanted to practice yoga as part of our pregnancies and paid for 10 more classes.

Week after week, we worked on poses that stretched our muscles and quieted our minds. And because the prenatal yoga class has an element of childbirth preparation, it helped us envision a healthy and positive delivery.

The conscious breath-work allowed us to focus on our babies and ourselves. I had only taken one yoga class before, and it was during a lunch hour at my previous job.

I’ve also tried some yoga through some videos at home, but this was the first time I was able to truly let go.

Admittedly, it wasn’t always easy to push away the constant to-do lists in my head. However, like clockwork, by the end of class I found myself so relaxed and carefree that I was on the verge of sleeping – that often occurred during shavasana, or resting pose – my favorite.

Jessica and I viewed the weekly classes as an opportunity to get a little exercise, and force a break in the busy workday. We also saw it as a chance to

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in very hard to focus on the

those 6 to 39 weeks pregnant

355.

baby and to repeat mantras that would help us during delivery.

It was amazing to witness which poses excited my baby – one that is a gentle rock from side to side – and one where we lay flat on our backs and just breathed deeply. And it was fun to feel kicks when I played the yoga CD in my car.

I was really struck when Katherine Austin, founder of Karma Yoga, said we have the most influence on our children during the gestational period and that is one reason she wanted to offer the class for expectant mothers.

She said Karma Yoga currently is offering Michigan's only full-scale family yoga center. Among the classes offered are sessions for women who are attempting to conceive, those who have just had babies, couple's yoga for parents and partners and Spirit Baby Yoga classes for babies 6 weeks to 3 years old.

Hall-Gendjar called the expectant parents class "the new date night," and I must say my husband and I found it a wonderful way to connect when we took a class a few nights ago. I'm looking forward to the Mommy-and-Me classes, too.

I've become a believer in the power of yoga and signed up for 10 more classes. Not only have I been introduced to an entire new genre of spiritual music to supplement my contemporary gospel collection, but I'm also convinced the tips from the class will come in handy particularly during delivery as I attempt another natural childbirth.

Two weeks ago Jessica had her baby – a boy, Leonel Andres. She said the yoga classes her really focus on her second pregnancy – something that was very hard to do otherwise with a full-time job and a toddler. She also said she liked how it made her body feel.

"During my first pregnancy, I exercised more often because I had more time," she said. "This time around I needed to make a little exercise go a long way, and the movements in the yoga class made me push my flexibility and strength at the same time."

I agree with Jessica and I anxiously await my child – due any day now.