

Coaching “Magic” — Helping Clients Find Motivation in Trimester 3

It's summer, and your pregnant client is in her third trimester. She's noticing that she's not motivated to do her usual cardio training. She likes to lift, but her regular walking sessions during her lunch break at work just aren't appealing anymore. She's noticing more aches and pains, and she's afraid she'll sweat through her work clothes because she doesn't have the time to change her clothes before she walks.

Step 1: Thank her for sharing details about her current situation with you. It's important that she feels heard and validated. In addition to being frustrated by her lack of motivation, she may also feel guilty or ashamed that she's not into something that used to work well for her.

Step 2: Validate and affirm how she's feeling and lend an empathetic ear. If she has been experiencing more aches and pains with her typical movement routine, remind her that it's totally appropriate to make some changes. She may feel heard and comforted knowing that her concerns are absolutely normal. Acknowledge how she's feeling and make sure she knows you are listening by reflecting and asking relevant and thoughtful follow-up questions.

Step 3: Offer two to three choices that may potentially be a better fit for now.

The conversation may look something like this:

Coach: Thank you so much for sharing this information with me. It's important to me to know how you're feeling so I can help you modify your program as necessary throughout your pregnancy based on what's best for you. (*Step 1*) I'm sorry to hear that you're experiencing some aches and pains, and that your mid-day walk hasn't been something you feel motivated to do. Based on where you are in your pregnancy, some aches and pains may be normal, and I can certainly understand not wanting to get all sweaty in the middle of the work day.

Can you tell me a bit more about your aches and pains? What seems to be bothering you? Are there any activities or positions that aggravate those symptoms or help them feel better?

Client: When I'm at work if I sit for too long I notice my back start to ache. If I'm on my feet either standing or walking for too long, my back starts to hurt as well.

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Coach: Got it! So sitting, standing, or walking for too long seems to make your lower back hurt. That’s been a common issue among my pregnant clients. It also sounds like walking might not be your first choice for cardio. (Step 2) Are you open to trying different types of cardio activity?

Client: I haven’t really done much for other cardio, but I’m willing to try other things.

Coach: Since you’re open to trying different types of cardio, which of these options sounds most enjoyable and realistic for you right now?

Option 1: Instead of walking during your lunch breaks, are you open to swimming or doing some type of water workout after work a few days each week? This could be a good option to help you stay active through your third trimester, and the buoyancy of the water may help ease some of the pregnancy-related discomfort.

Option 2: Instead of doing cardio separately from your personal training sessions, would you be open to having me add some cardio-based exercises into your current strength training program?

Option 3: At this point in your pregnancy, do you feel up to continuing to do some structured cardio training at all? If not, that’s totally OK. It may be helpful for you to stay active by doing normal daily living activities like mowing the lawn, washing dishes, doing laundry, vacuuming, and getting your house ready for the baby. If you’d like, I can help you come up with a light at home routine that could help you continue to prepare for labor and delivery.

Present your client with a few good options and help her evaluate which one might be best for her.

Focus on the benefits and educate your clients along the way about the things that will help keep her body functioning optimally.