

# Pregnancy the Alexander way



Wendy Oldfield with little Luka, aged 1 month

The Alexander technique will give you insight into the importance of correct posture and movement not only for pregnancy and labour, but for life in general. Tina Otte spoke to Noeline Levinson as she put Wendy Oldfield through her paces

**B**ringing a baby into the world is a miraculous experience that brings with it a range of emotional and physical challenges. Not one single body system is unaffected by this explosion of life deep inside a woman's body. Many women bloom and claim that they have never felt better in their lives. But there is no disguising the fact that some aspects of pregnancy can be very uncomfortable. As the body adapts to accommodate the developing baby, it's common to feel achy and stiff. It's hard to believe that a lot of these aches, pains and niggles, including breathlessness, constipation and heartburn, are exacerbated by poor posture.

Most of us are guilty of neglecting our posture. We slouch in front of the TV, slump at our desks at work and walk around with our shoulders rounded, carrying unnecessary tension in our bodies. During pregnancy, our bodies turn into a productive hormone factory and the raised levels of oestrogen and progesterone have the effect of softening all the smooth body tissues. Another hormone, called relaxin, is released by the placenta and works to loosen the connective tissues holding our joints together (ligaments become more elastic). All this is necessary to allow the uterus to expand as your baby grows.

Your growing baby also alters your centre of gravity, so poor posture can make the uncomfortable side-effects of pregnancy 10 times worse.

## What is the Alexander technique?

The Alexander technique has to do with the 'use of self': the way we move, perform actions and co-ordinate ourselves in our everyday activities. The way we use our bodies has far-reaching implications for our posture, our poise and even our freedom to