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Help, I'm HUGE!

If your massive bump has you wedged in the bath, join the club! Here, mums share their funny stories of coming unstuck and we reveal how to avoid the same

AS YOUR PREGNANCY moves on, your expanding waistline can land you in tricky situations, to the point of getting stuck in a toilet cubicle while shopping. 'Many women don't want to accept that they're huge and give in to the fact that they're less mobile,' says midwife Jenny Gough. 'But it's a temporary phase so you need to be realistic and practical. Make sure you keep your phone with you, so you can call for help. And listen to your body. Acknowledge you can't do quite as much. If you're out and about, take regular stops - there's no harm in going for another coffee.'



I got stuck in the bath!

Michelle McCann, 35, from Brighton, mum to Isobel, five, and Luke, five months, remembers all too clearly the problems she had when heavily pregnant. 'During my first pregnancy it once took 15 minutes to get myself out of the bath,' says Michelle. 'I had to roll onto all fours! After that I didn't have a bath without my husband at home. He also had to shave my legs!'

Jenny agrees that getting in and out of the bath later in pregnancy can be quite difficult: 'Put a chair near the bath for something to lean on and make sure there's someone around to help.'

Your bump can also get in the way if you have an older child to look after, as Jaime

Fagan, 35, from Bristol, found out. 'At eight months pregnant with my second baby Eli,

now three, I took my five-year-old, Isaac to soft play,' says Jaime. 'He insisted I chase him around the play structure. One part was like a car wash with two others to squeeze through. My massive bump became wedged!'

Jenny says to think carefully before choosing where to go on a day out in the latter stages of pregnancy: 'If you have children, get a non-pregnant friend to go with you. Let your little one run around with them so you can relax a little. And be aware of the size of your bump!'

I had to compromise

Life doesn't stand still when you get pregnant. Until you start maternity leave, you'll find you have to carry on as normal but with an expanding tummy. This is when you need to start asking for help or make compromises.

Abbi Olive, 30, from North Yorkshire, is mum to Percy, one. She came unstuck when starting a baking session. 'I keep my cake tins in a corner cupboard but during my last week of pregnancy I couldn't squat down far enough to reach inside,' she says. 'I remember trying to extricate a large cake tin using a wooden spoon, a potato masher and other long implements, all while sitting on the kitchen floor! I opted for a muffin tray instead and made mini cakes.'

When you reach late pregnancy, don't be embarrassed about asking for help. You will usually find that people will spot your bump and come to help. So, if you drop your loose change on the floor in the supermarket, other customers are likely to rush to help pick it up.

My friend helped me out

Hannah Doyle, 38, from Richmond, London, is mum to Sam and Theo, both five months. 'I was visiting a friend of a

friend's house and quickly realised it was a shoes-off sort of home,' she says. 'Because of my huge bump, thanks to twins, this was impossible. Luckily, my friend spotted my problem and helped me take off my shoes.'

Some bump problems can easily be solved before you leave home - slip-on shoes are on most pregnant women's shopping lists. Others require making the best of a tricky situation.

'During the last month of my pregnancy, my bump extended so far in front of me I couldn't fit into most public toilets. I had to resort to using the disabled loo - but needs must!' says Anna Carey, 36, from Worthing.

'It was time to stop'

There comes a point when your bump is too big to stick to your normal routine, and it is something you simply have to come to terms with and accept.

'At 39 weeks pregnant I was on one of my regular gym visits and went on to the cross trainer,' says Samantha, 44, from Stansted. 'It was the day before my c-section and I was doing my cool down afterwards when I felt a sharp pain beneath my ribs. I slowed down and the pain subsided. But I was still fairly uncomfortable - the baby's foot was in an awkward place. I suddenly realised I couldn't get off the machine without help!'

'It's good to keep active but know your limits and listen to your body,' says Jenny. 'Think about alternative, more gentle forms of exercise, such as yoga. Your body - and your bump - will tell you when it's time to rest up and get ready for labour.'

'In the meantime, if you do find yourself in a fix, just smile. It's all part of being pregnant,' says Jenny.

BUMP & BIRTH BIG BUMPS

HOW TO DEAL WITH A SUPER-SIZED BUMP

- 1 Try gentle exercise such as yoga. It will strengthen your core muscles and help you move from sitting to standing.
- 2 Tell your midwife or GP if you have back pain that is stopping you moving, and ask to be referred to a physiotherapist.
- 3 Have a pregnancy massage to help relieve the stress of carrying a big bump.
- 4 Lay on your left side if you want to veg out. It's a good position for the baby, as the layout of your internal organs gives her more room than when you lie on your right side.

✔ Sit on a birthing ball rather than a sofa in the last few weeks. It'll be far easier to get up!



MEET THE EXPERT
Jenny Gough is a midwife and birth preparation specialist.

3 MUST-BUYS WHEN YOU'RE READY TO POP

Avoid over-stretching with a dressing stick. Pick up laundry, reach things at the back of the cupboard and sort out that stubborn itch you just can't reach! £3.47, nrs-uk.co.uk

Ease your feet into slip-on shoes while still sitting upright with this long-handled shoehorn, £1.98, diy.com

Scrub your toes even when you can't reach your feet. Shower sandals, £26.34, completecareshop.co.uk



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