I started leading prenatal classes approximately 3 years ago. It came about very simply: no other instructor wanted to teach these clients, because they were pregnant! Being a mother myself, I knew not only of the joy of motherhood, but also of the stress and changes the body goes through during pregnancy. So I volunteered; it turned out to be a wonderful experience.

Being pregnant is a blessing and with a little caution, women can continue to be active throughout their pregnancy. It seems that very few of us instruct prenatal classes because of the fear that we might somehow hurt someone in our class. This became evident once, when I was desperately looking for a substitute for my prenatal class: it turned out to be nearly impossible to find an instructor. No one dared teach Aqua Natal, for fear of having pregnant participants perform a potentially harmful movement — this despite the fact that due to the lack of Aqua Natal classes, we often get pregnant ladies in our regular classes.

With this in mind, it is important for all Aquafitness leaders to have a good grasp of some of the basic guidelines of prenatal aquafitness. In the workshop I will be presenting in Toronto on June 1st, the following concepts will be explored:

- **Guidelines used when teaching a healthy pregnant woman:**
  - Aqua natal exercise (aquafitness during the childbearing year,) provides a comfortable, enjoyable form of physical activity that benefits both the unborn child (fetus) and the expectant woman. Water is a safe environment to exercise in.

- **What the latest research says:**
  - Regular exercise — especially Aqua natal exercise — improves delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the growing fetus, during exercise and at rest.

- **Contraindications to exercise during pregnancy:**
  - Pregnancy is not an illness. Pregnant women should use the same caution and common sense as anyone engaged in a healthy, holistic exercise program.

- **Physical changes in the childbearing years:**
  - Understand changes that take place on joints, breasts, ligaments, heart rate, pelvic floor, diastasis recti.

The Hey Baby + (Mom) workshop was created to help instructors adapt to the unexpected drop-in pregnant guest. I hope to see you at the workshop: there is a lot more to be discussed!