



What is Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy and is it Right for You?



Pelvic Floor PT May Be Right for You If YOU

- LEAK PEE, GAS, OR POO
- HAVE PAIN WITH SEX
- HAVE BACK PAIN OR TAILBONE PAIN
- HAVE CONSTIPATION OR HEMORRHOIDS
- FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS BULGING OR FALLING OUT OF YOUR VAGINA
- RUN TO THE BATHROOM TOO OFTEN
- HAVE A GAP IN YOUR BELLY MUSCLES
- IF YOU HAVE SENSITIVE OR PAINFUL SCARS FROM CHILDBIRTH
- AREN'T SURE HOW TO RETURN TO EXERCISE SAFELY



What is Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy?

It's more than just KEGELS! In pelvic floor physical therapy we help pregnant and postpartum people heal their private parts. Physical therapists are experts in treating muscular issues throughout the body. Pelvic floor physical therapists have advanced training to assess the pelvic floor muscles, nerves, and organs in the pelvis. We use manual therapy techniques, exercise and muscle re-education to help you heal the issues listed to the left. Our approach is gentle, and we will listen to your needs throughout the treatment session. You will also receive a home exercise program to continue to make progress at home.

Questions? Contact:

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What is the Pelvic Floor?

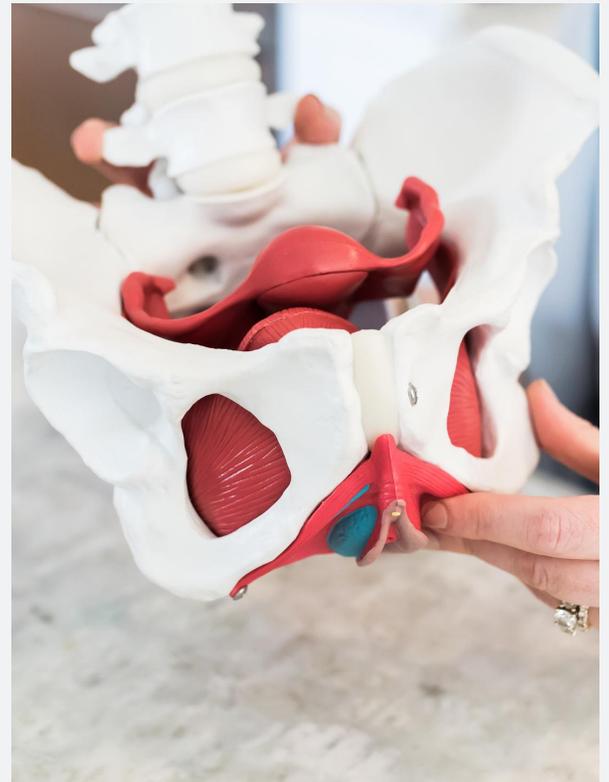
These Very important muscles get stretched out and weakened during pregnancy.

The pelvic floor is a "hammock" of muscles that run from your pubic bone to your tail bone. These muscles help control bowel, bladder and sexual function. These muscles are under your conscious control, meaning you can contract and relax them. The muscles can be overactive or under active. You can do specific exercises to help these muscles function better - yes sometimes that means "Kegels" but not always! If the muscles are too tight to begin with don't want to tighten them more, you start with learning how to relax the muscles.

How to Connect with your Pelvic Floor

When you are trying to hold back gas or stop urine flow, you are using your pelvic floor muscles. Practice gently tightening these muscles. Squeeze and lift the rectal area, plus the vaginal area for women and the scrotum and penis for men, without tightening your buttocks (behind) or abdomen (belly). Then fully relax the muscles back down.

When you first begin your exercise program, check yourself frequently to ensure you are doing it correctly. While you look in a mirror, place your hands on your abdomen and buttocks, and tighten the pelvic floor muscles. Keep your belly and buttocks relaxed. Continue to experiment until you don't feel or see your belly, thighs or behind move anymore, and you are only tightening the the pelvic floor muscles. You can also place your hand on your perineum to feel a lifting up and in sensation there. It often takes practice to perform these important exercises correctly. *Remember to fully relax the muscles after squeezing them.* If you have to push to pee, have trouble emptying your bladder, have pelvic or tailbone pain then it is possible that your pelvic floor muscles are too tight and doing these exercises is NOT right for you. Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy can help you learn how to reconnect with these muscles properly.



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Bladder Health

It is very common to notice changes in your bladder habits after you give birth.

Some of these changes may include increased frequency, urgency or leaking pee. Stress Incontinence is when you leak pee with coughing, laughing, sneezing or exercise. About 33% of women report stress incontinence at 3 months postpartum.* Some habits can make these problem worse and should be avoided. These include:

- Hovering over the toilet instead of sitting down
- Stopping and starting mid-stream to do your pelvic floor exercises
- Trying to force the flow of urine or pushing to pee
- Going to the bathroom 'just in case...' – especially at night

*Thom, David & Rortveit, Guri. (2010). Prevalence of postpartum urinary incontinence: A systematic review. Acta obstetrica et gynecologica Scandinavica. 89. 1511-22. 10.3109/00016349.2010.526188.

Tips for a Healthy Bladder

- When you get up during the night to feed your baby, don't go to the bathroom 'just in case'. Go when you need to go!
- Your bladder has had a baby pressing on it for the past nine months – you need to help it regain its capacity by only going when you actually need to go.
- Make sure you are drinking enough water. Restricting fluids can actually make the problem worse. Sip fluids (mostly water) slowly throughout the day.
- Stay Regular! Constipation and straining to have a bowel movement can put a lot of pressure on your bladder's support system.
- Avoid bladder irritants such as alcohol, coffee, black tea & carbonated drinks. They increase urgency, frequency and leakage. Try eliminating or reducing a potential irritant for a few days and see if there is a change in your bladder's behavior.
- When you go to the bathroom, sit on the toilet with your feet on the ground and rest. This helps your pelvic floor relax and your bladder empty more efficiently. Don't hold your breath or strain to pee.
- Seeing a pelvic floor physical therapist can help.



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