

PUTTING YOUR PELVIC FLOOR FIRST



WHAT WE WILL COVER



What is so important about the pelvis and its muscles?

The anatomy of the female and male pelvis.

What happens when things go pear shaped?

What you do that may help or harm the pelvic floor.

Helpful resources.

WHY DOES THE PELVIC FLOOR MATTER?

You are only as strong as your weakest link!



60% of low back pain can originate from the pelvis (joints, soft tissue, organs)



Incontinence is a **COMMON** but not a **NORMAL** part of aging, high impact exercise or childbirth

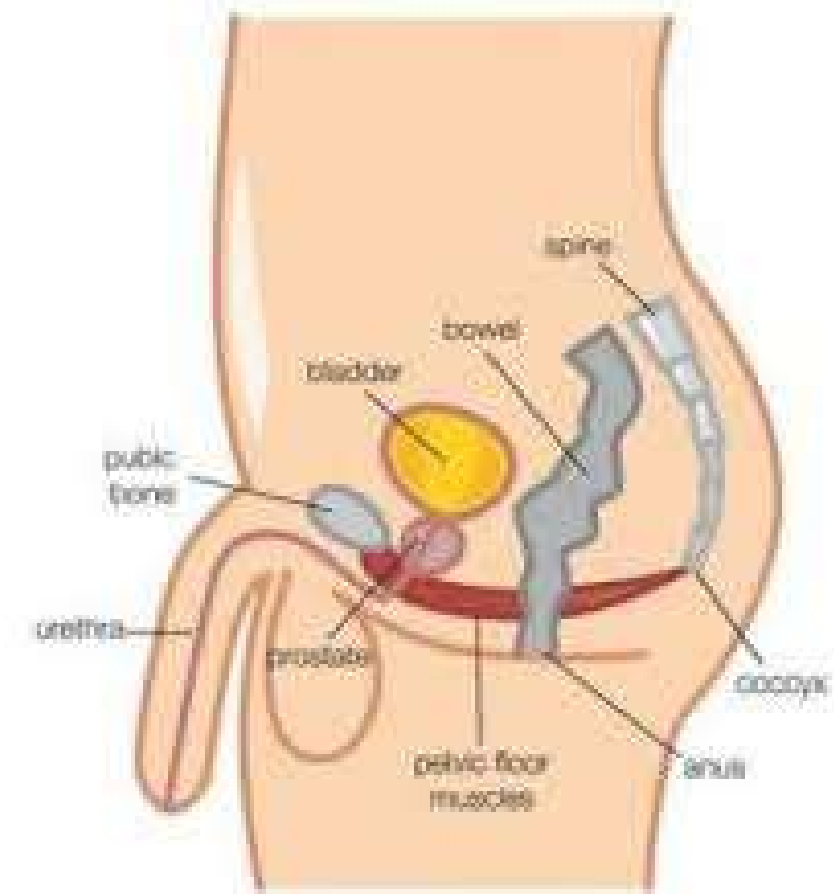
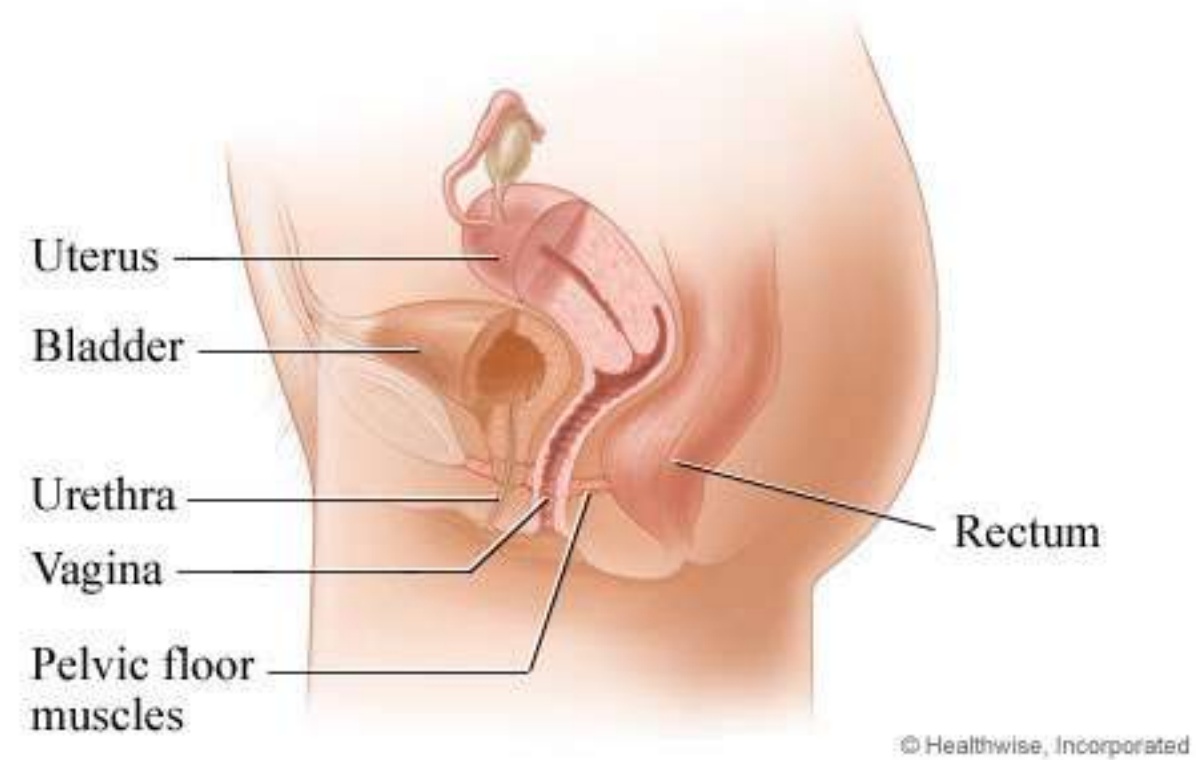
Incontinence is treatable, preventable and often curable



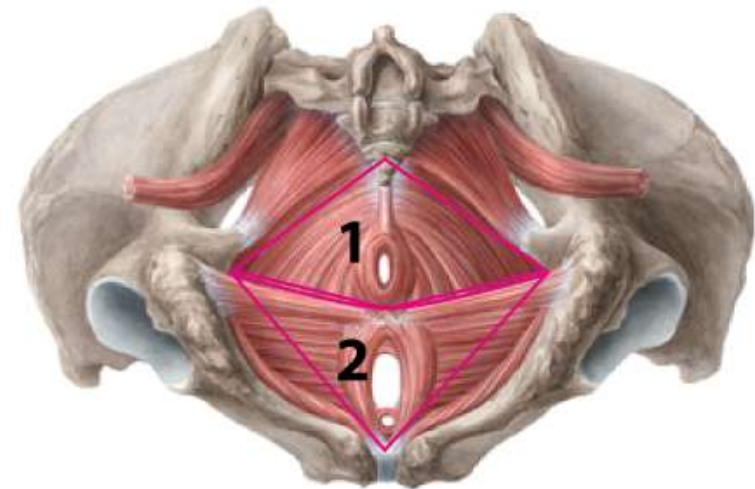
daily pelvic floor exercise may prevent incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse

it is never too late to teach old muscles new tricks!

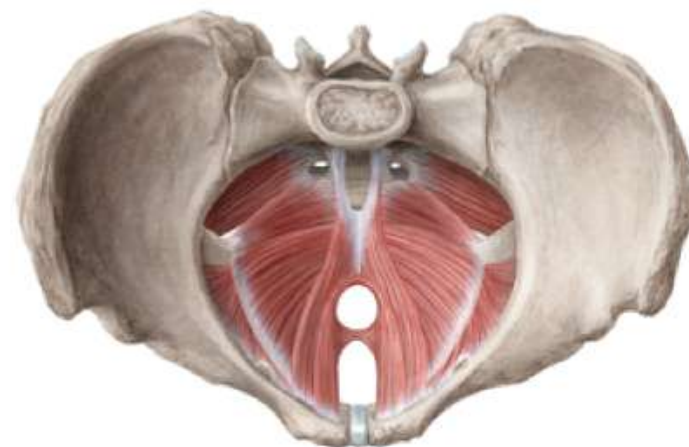
THE AMAZING HUMAN BODY



Pelvis seen from below



Pelvis seen from above

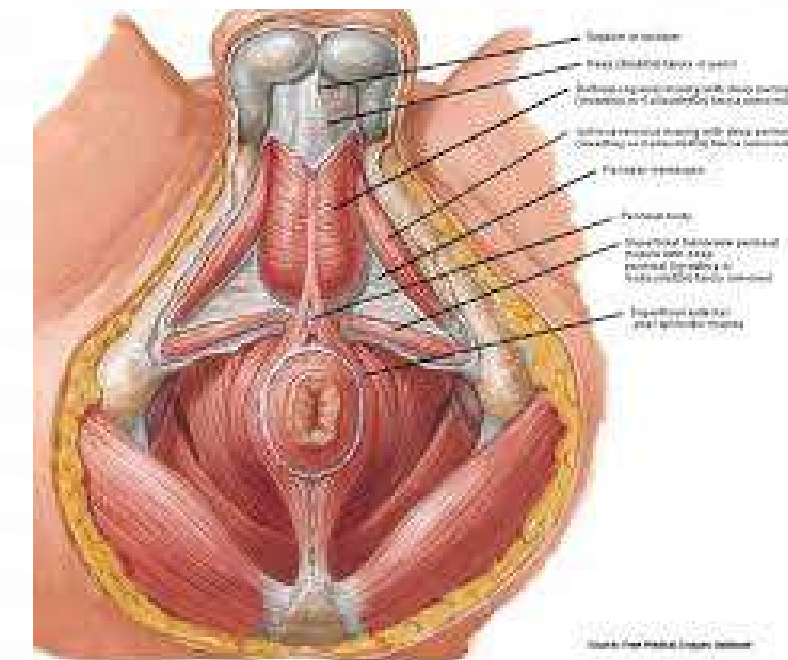


The pelvic floor is divided into 2 triangles.

1 - Anterior pelvic floor muscles: urogenital space

2 - Posterior pelvic floor muscles: rectal space

Female pelvic anatomy



Male pelvic anatomy

WE NEED HEALTHY PELVIC FLOORS!

FUNCTIONAL PELVIC FLOORS HELP WITH:

Continence (control) of the bladder and the bowel

Sexual function

Stabalizing our hips, pelvis and lower back

Keeping our organs inside!

BUT BE WARNED

Sometimes our pelvic floor muscles can become TOO TIGHT! This may occur from overactivity (i.e. horse riding, pilates) or anxiety.

Symptoms may include; difficulty/painful peeing, constipation, painful intercourse, incontinence. An internal assessment is required to determine if muscles are too tight or too weak because treatment is very different.

THE IMPACT OF DYSFUNCTION

A FEW FACTS

25%

› 15 YEARS HAVE SOME
PELVIC FLOOR
DYSFUNCTION

1/3

FEMALES HAVE
INCONTINENCE
AFTER DELIVERY

28-80%

ELITE FEMALE HIGH-
IMPACT SPORT ATHLETES
HAVE INCONTINENCE



PELVIC FLOOR DYSFUNCTION CAN CAUSE:

Incontinence can be brought on by a sudden increase in pressure (cough, sneeze, jump), an intense urge to pee even though bladders not full (triggered by running water, key-in-lock, toilet sign) or a combination of both.

Prolapse = "to fall out of place" (of uterus, vaginal wall). This causes a sense of heaviness.

**Pelvic floor muscles must meet
abdominal pressure!**

AM I AT RISK?

Some things increase our risk of pelvic floor dysfunction:

- Pregnancy
- Having had babies
- Women during or post-menopause
- Having had pelvic surgery
- Being an elite high-impact sport athlete
- Having a chronic cough - due to smoking, allergies etc.
- Having constipation
- Being overweight
- Lifting heavy weights



THE IMPACT OF PELVIC FLOOR DYSFUNCTION

A pelvic floor that has gone 'pear shaped' could make us:

- Become less active because of leaking and/or pain
- More at risk of developing low bone density
- Feel less inclined to be sociable
- Gain weight which often worsens symptoms
- Less interested in sex/intimacy
- Have an increased risk of back injury due to less core stabilization

GOOD NEWS!

Here are a few helpful guidelines:

- Lifting - use low weights, preferably lift from waist height, avoid straining
- Recruit pelvic floor muscles before resistance/pressure, rest them in between sets
- Posture - maintain neutral spine to minimize abdominal pressure
- Breathe - exhale during exertion and never hold your breath
- Choose supported positions - eg sitting on swiss ball, sitting, lying down
- Stance - keep feet hip width apart in standing to limit widening of pelvis
- Take care - strengthen gradually, especially if injured, tired or sick
- Rest - between sets and focus on letting your pelvic muscles let go
- Listen to your body - if an exercise/machine makes symptoms worse, avoid it
- Wearing a pad is ok if it allows you to keep exercising, but aim to fix the cause
- If you can't smile during your exercise, it may be too intense!

SAFE CORE EXERCISES FOR WEAK PELVIC FLOORS

YES

- Wall Squat with Ball
- Modified Plank
- Wall Push Ups
- Arm/Leg Lifts on all 4's
- Knees side to side on Ball
- Leg Lift sitting on Ball

NO

- V Sit
- Hover Plank
- Full Push Ups
- Crunches
- 100's
- Double Leg Lifts/Lowers
- Ab Ex with Medicine Ball



PELVIC FLOOR STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

FITMOMMYFITFAMILY.COM

ASSISTED HEEL DROPS



BRIDGE



DEAD BUG



BIRD DOG



THE ABS PRINCIPLE

Alignment

Chest lifted, long spine, ear over shoulder over hip

Breathing

Inhale = relaxation/descent

Exhale = elevation; slow breath in and follow relaxation, exhale slowly and follow elevation.

Strengthening

On the next breath, as you exhale, follow the elevation and lift your pelvic floor muscles GENTLY, hold 5 seconds while still breathing then on next breath IN, relax/let go.

**Practice - Practice -
Practice**

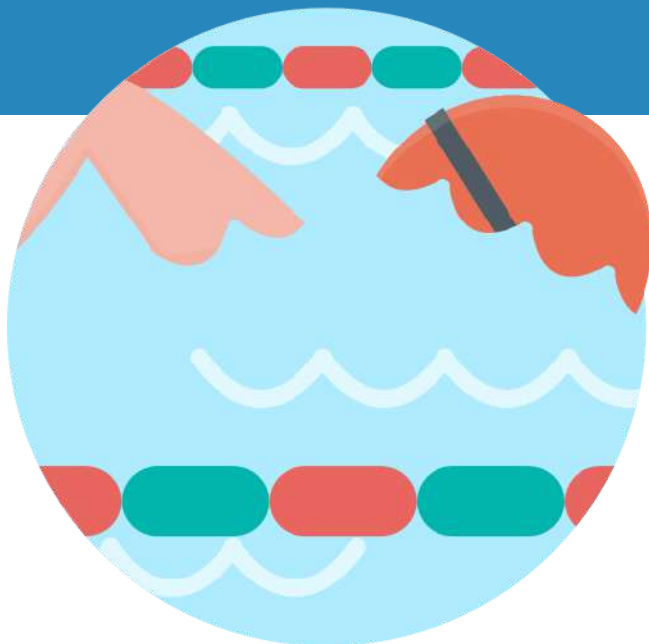
**1 - 3 x per day at
least 5 x per week**

**Improvement will
take 2 - 6 weeks**

PELVIC FLOOR SAFE AEROBIC EXERCISE

BASIC

- swimming
- step-fit
- cross trainer
- aqua fitness
- cycling



ADVANCED

- paddling
- rowing
- jogging
- steps/hills
- zumba



INTENSE

- skipping
- trampoline
- boxing
- cross/metafit
- fast sport



HELPFUL TIPS & TRICKS

Close your lips - squeezing your mouth closed helps to close the vaginal opening

To calm the bladder slowly go up and down on your toes

Sitting down increases pressure on the vulva which helps the pelvis floor muscles

Practice recruiting/relaxing ABS on hands and knees 'let your belly hang out'

QUERIES?

Presenter

Danielle Lapointe

Physiotherapist

Dynamic Rehab

backactive@gmail.com

Helpful websites

www.continence.co.nz

www.physiotherapy.org.nz

www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au

Supporting organisations

Sport Gisborne Tairāwhiti

06 868 9943

www.sportgisborne.org.nz



Total Body Power Plate

0210 834 7868

