



BUMPS INFO SHEET 2

Pelvic Floor Exercises

WHAT ARE THE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES & WHAT DO THEY DO?

The floor of the pelvis is made up of a sling of muscles called “the pelvic floor” that stretch from your tailbone at the back to your pubic bone in the front of your pelvis. The pelvic floor muscles support your bladder, uterus and bowel, so are very important to control the function of these organs and support the growing fetus when pregnant. They also have a role in sexual function. During pregnancy & in the postnatal recovery it is extremely important to keep these muscles strong & perform isolated exercises correctly.

HOW DO I LOCATE THE MUSCLES?

The first step to performing pelvic floor exercises is to make sure you can identify them correctly. When you go to the toilet try to stop the flow of urine mid stream and feel these muscles tighten at the base of your pelvis. Note: This should only be done as a test & not as an exercise.

PRACTICE CONTRACTING THEM?

In a comfortable position sitting, lying or standing with a straight back try to imagine that sensation of stopping urine or wind. Try and hold this sensation and then relax and let go of this sensation. If you cannot feel this then try a different position, usually lying down without gravity is easier.

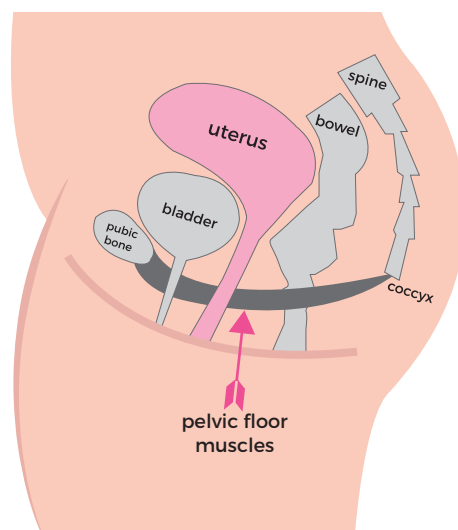
Helpful tips?

- ♥ Relax the muscles on the outside- bottom, thigh & tummy
- ♥ Squeeze in and up the deep pelvic muscles from back to front
- ♥ Imagine drawing your 2 sit bones together & up
- ♥ Try not to hold your breath
- ♥ Make sure you completely relax after holding & feel them “let go”

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES — PREGNANCY & BEYOND

In sitting, side lying, 4 pt kneel or supine, keep your back straight, shoulders relaxed and maintaining a regular breath. Focus only on the pelvic floor muscles to get good isolated muscle training.

- ♥ Squeeze and lift the pelvic floor muscles only for approx. 5-10 seconds (you may only be able to do a 3-4 second hold initially)
- ♥ Relax for up to 8 seconds and then repeat 10 times
- ♥ Perform the same exercise as short, strong 1-2 second holds. Repeat these 10 times.
- ♥ Try to do this 3 times a day in different positions.



Pelvic Floor first and the continence foundation has an APP that provides advice, exercises & reminders to exercise. Go to www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au for more information & to download the FREE APP.