

YOUR GUIDE TO YOUR PELVIC FLOOR



BOROONDARA
OSTEOPATHY

DO YOU NEED TO STRENGTHEN YOUR PELVIC FLOOR?

This document includes:

- 1. Testing your strength**
- 2. The right technique!**
- 3. The training exercise**
- 4. A realistic timeline for improvement**

Please take the time and really concentrate on this. Don't skim over the document thinking it's easy. These exercises can be rather difficult and need to be focused on and practiced.

TESTING YOUR PELVIC FLOOR STRENGTH:

This is a simple test that applies to all women, no at any age, and before and after birth: next time when you go to the bathroom to pee, try stopping the urine mid-stream. If you have trouble stopping the flow that may be because of weak muscles.

Don't worry – muscles are there to be used and ready to be strengthened, so with some training you can improve the strength in your pelvic floor muscles.

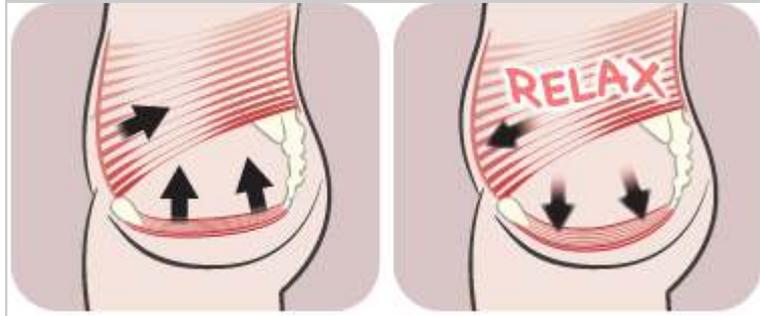
Just remember though, even if you CAN stop the flow, don't think you don't need these exercises. All women should be practicing them daily to reduce their bladder leak for today and decades to follow!

IMPORTANT: Please don't keep practicing stopping your flow. Once every 2 weeks to test is ok but if you keep doing it, you risk a urinary tract infection (UTI).



HOW CAN YOU STRENGTHEN YOUR PELVIC FLOOR?

First we need to really find these forgotten champions we simply call Pelvic Floor. Pretend you are standing in a long queue ...waiting...waiting...waiting, and you are holding in some wind or a wee. It's the pelvic floor muscles that are the work-horses here. Can you feel them? It will be a slight pulling sensation.

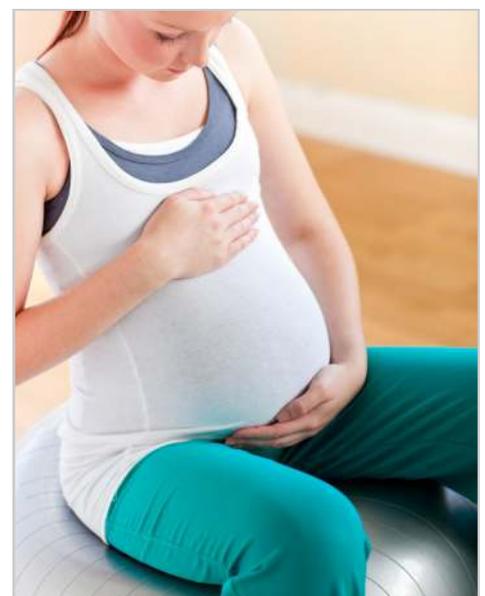


TECHNIQUE TO TRAIN THE PELVIC FLOOR :

This is the most important part of the pelvic floor muscle exercises. It **MUST** be done correctly! (Seated, Standing or Lying down)

1. Imagine letting go like you would wee or pass wind. Let your tummy muscles all hang out. See if you can squeeze in and hold the muscles inside the pelvis while you breathe. Nothing above your belly button should tighten or tense. There will be tensing and flattening of the lower part of the abdominal wall but this is expected. This part of the tummy (your core) works together with the pelvic floor muscles.
2. Try tightening your muscles really gently to feel just the pelvic floor muscles lifting and squeezing in. If you cannot feel your muscles contracting, change your position (seated, standing or lying) and try again.
3. After a contraction it is important to relax the muscles. This will allow your muscles to recover from the previous contraction and prepare for the next contraction.

It is super common to try too hard and have lots of outside muscles tighten. **Good on you for giving it a go** but note that this is an **internal exercise and correct technique is critical**. Doing pelvic floor muscle exercises the wrong way can be bad for you, so please see a health professional if you cannot feel your muscles hold or relax.



HOW MANY DO I DO AND FOR HOW LONG?

If you have mastered the art of contracting your pelvic floor muscles correctly, you can try holding the inward squeeze for longer (up to 10 seconds) before relaxing. Make sure you can breathe easily while you squeeze.

If you can do this exercise, repeat it up to 10 times, but only as long as you can do it with perfect technique while breathing quietly and keeping everything above the belly button relaxed. This can be done more often during the day to improve control.

WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT TIME-WISE?

As with all muscle-strengthening exercise, you won't see (or feel) immediate effects after the first round. Allow yourself at least 3-4 weeks until you check your results. You can do the simple wee-test again (important: please don't do this more often than every two weeks. It can lead to urinary infections, let your wee flow freely!), or you can actually feel the clenching more intensely when you pull those little muscles together in your body. The more strength you build, the longer you will be able to clench those muscles tightly together (for 10 seconds for example).

About the author:

Dr Katie Willy studied Osteopathy 1999-2003. Very new out of uni she began her practice in a GP's clinic in Balwyn North while working in large clinics in Brighton and Berwick. Her practice has grown to include multiple Osteopaths. Pregnancy had always been an interest area of Katie's, one where she completed further study in Obstetrics and the treatment of infants. All Osteopaths at Boroondara Osteopathy have the added benefit of sharing her 2 pregnancies with her and building a greater understanding of the challenges faced by many women during this time. Katie continues to spread the word about Osteopathy and it's value to the community. Her passion in educating her clients about pain will always be paramount in her treatment. She believes that by educating her clients, they too will feel more at ease with their pain due to understanding the mechanisms behind it.

