

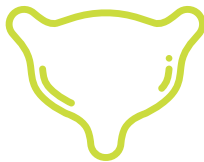
WHAT IS THE PELVIC FLOOR AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

The pelvic floor muscles are muscles that sit at the base of your pelvis like a hammock. They have 3 main jobs:



1. Supports the pelvic organs (bladder, uterus, rectum).
2. Prevents unintentional urination and defecation (incontinence).
3. Supports sexual and reproductive functions.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE PELVIC FLOOR DYSFUNCTION?



- You experience involuntary leaking with coughing, sneezing, exercising, lifting or whenever you get the urge to use the bathroom.
- You are experiencing pain around your genitals during intercourse, with menstruation or while toileting.
- You are having difficulty fully emptying your bladder or bowels.



WHAT IS PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE TRAINING, ISN'T THAT JUST "KEGELS"?



- A kegel is when you contract or tighten your pelvic floor muscles. These contractions are usually held and repeated several times.
- Consensus evidence has determined that not everyone needs to strengthen or tighten their pelvic floor. Rather, the key skill is pelvic muscle coordination.
- Your ability to contract and fully relax your pelvic floor allows for greater efficiency and function of these muscles. This is what we train.

PREGNANCY

EVERYONE WHO IS PREGNANT IS BOUND TO HAVE PELVIC FLOOR DYSFUNCTION AFTERWARDS, RIGHT?



- No! Research shows us that pregnancy and labour does not necessarily lead to pelvic floor dysfunction. That said, it is not uncommon.
- Your pelvic floor function prior to pregnancy is a strong predictor of your function afterwards.
- To decrease chances of dysfunction after birth, stay active in your pregnancy and post partum, and engage in pelvic floor muscle training.

IS IT SAFE TO GET BACK INTO EXERCISE POSTPARTUM?



- Yes! Some important things to remember are:

Wait **12 weeks** before starting higher impact activities - jumping, running or running-based sports.

Swimming, cycling, elliptical, hiking, walking, yoga and weight lifting are all great ways to build up strength and endurance leading up to that 12 week mark.

Start slow and listen to your body! Gradual progressions and increases are the way to go.



- A couple of tips and tricks include:

The **24 hour recovery rule**: you know you've done too much if you are experiencing more pain or symptoms at 24 hours after participating in exercise.

Increase your exercise by no more than 10-20% per week (this can look like increasing your distance, time or weights/sets/reps).



- When in doubt, come chat with your pelvic health therapist! We can guide you and create an exercise program that is tailored to your recovery and your body.

If you have any questions about your pelvic health, feel free to reach out to a pelvic floor therapist. Find them on our website:

talltreehealth.ca/pelvic-health-physio