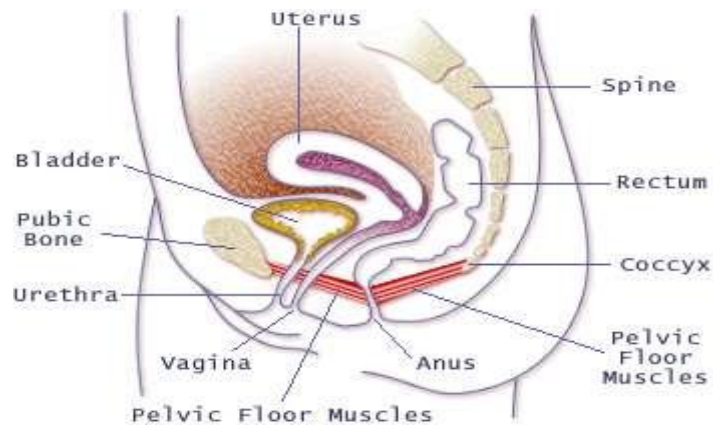


PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES DURING PREGNANCY



HOW DOES PREGNANCY AFFECT MY PELVIC FLOOR?

The pelvic floor is a layer of muscle and fascia which extends from your pubic bone to your tailbone. The urethra, vagina, and anus run through the pelvic floor so it is important for child-birth, continence, sexual function and pelvic stability. Your pelvic floor muscles will be stretched during pregnancy and it is very common to experience some urinary leakage from as early as 12 weeks.

Healthy pelvic floor muscles can help to:

- support the weight of pregnancy
- prevent stress and urge incontinence
- reduce the chances of developing prolapse later in life
- shorten the second stage of labour
- promote healing of the perineum after the birth (by facilitating blood flow to the area)

HOW DO I FIND MY PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES?

Pelvic floor muscles can feel different for each individual. If you are not sure, it may be worth consulting your Women's Health Physiotherapist.

Imagine you are trying to stop the flow of urine from your front passage. Now draw up gently through the perineum (between the front and back passage). You should feel a lift and squeeze.

You should NOT feel you are :

- pulling in your upper stomach muscles
- tightening of your buttocks
- squeezing your legs together
- holding your breath

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I EXERCISE MY PELVIC FLOOR?

Experts suggest that you should do both short and long (10 seconds) pelvic floor contractions and repeat these at least eight times per day. It is VERY important that you completely relax your pelvic floor muscles in between contractions. Relaxing the pelvic floor is an important skill, especially during the second stage of labour. This may help to prevent tearing of the perineum.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR WOMEN'S HEALTH PHYSIOTHERAPIST AT
PROACTIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY 40536222