

The Pelvic Floor Guide: Promoting Pelvic Floor Health and Continence with Physiotherapy

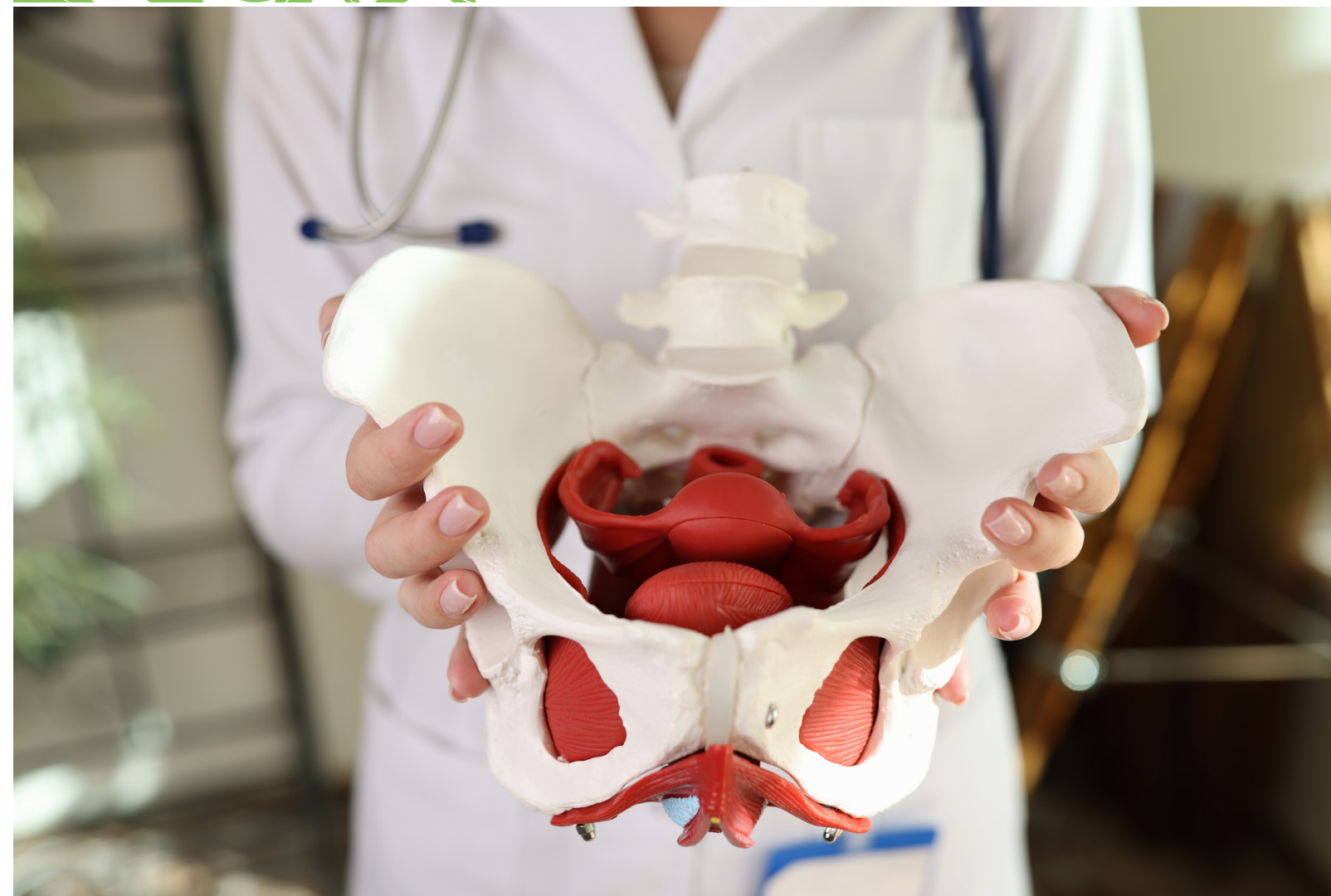


Contact and Additional Resources

For more information and professional advice, contact the Women's Wellness and Research Center's Physiotherapy Department:

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The Pelvic Floor Guide: Helping Your Health with Physiotherapy

Your pelvic floor muscles are important. They help you control your urine, stool, and support other body parts. Strong muscles can help prevent incontinence and help you feel better. Physiotherapy uses special exercises to help with this.

What is Incontinence?

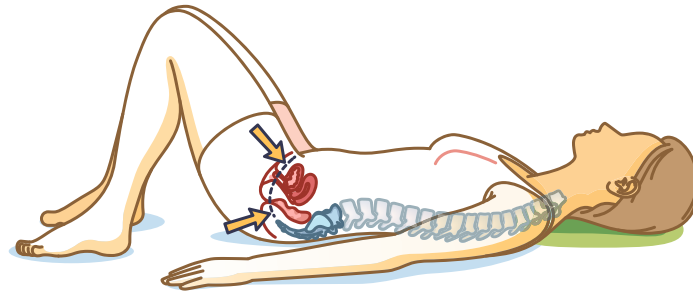
Incontinence is the involuntary leaking of urine or stool. Common types include:

- **Stress Incontinence:** Leaking with coughing, sneezing, or exercising. This happens because your pelvic muscles are weak.
- **Urge Incontinence:** You feel a strong need to pee and then leak.
- **Mixed Incontinence:** when you notice both stress and urge urinary incontinence.
- **Anal Incontinence:** Having trouble controlling your stool or gas.

Pregnancy, constipation, heavy lifting, weight, and other factors can cause pelvic floor problems.

How Physiotherapy Helps Your Pelvic Floor

Physiotherapy helps make pelvic muscles stronger. Here's how:



Pelvic Floor Exercises (Kegels): Lie on your back or sit comfortably. Tighten and hold your pelvic floor muscles, then relax. Do this every day.

How to Find Pelvic Floor Muscles: To find your pelvic floor muscles, try to stop the flow of urine or hold in gas. These muscles are what you use in Kegel exercises.

Try these exercises:

- **Slow Squeezes:** Imagine holding your urine. Tighten and hold your pelvic floor muscles for 10 seconds, then relax. Repeat 10 times.
- **Fast Squeezes:** Quickly tighten and relax, as if you are trying to stop the flow of urine. Repeat 10 times.
- **Bladder Training:** Learn to hold your urine longer and reduce leaking.
- **Electrical Stimulation:** These use gentle feedback or electrical pulses to help muscles.
- **Fast Contraction:** Squeeze your muscles before coughing, sneezing, or lifting. This helps prevent leaks.
- **Gradual Routine:** Start slow and make exercises harder as you go.

Other tips for pelvic health:

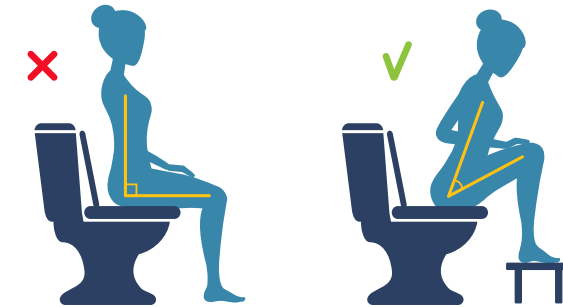
Drink Water: Drink 1.5–2 liters of water a day. Avoid too much soda or caffeine.

Eat Healthy: Eat food with fiber to help with digestion.

Stay Active: Stay at a healthy weight, avoid heavy lifting, and do gentle exercises.

Good Bathroom Habits: Sit with good posture. Use a footstool if needed.

Don't Strain: Breathe slowly to help your body relax when going to the bathroom.



Pelvic Floor Exercise Program

Here's a simple plan to help strengthen your pelvic muscles:

- Weeks 1–2: Do 10 quick squeezes and 10 slow squeezes (hold for 3 seconds), 3 times a day.
- Weeks 3–4: Do 15 quick and 15 slow squeezes (hold for 5 seconds), 3 times a day.
- Weeks 5–6: Do 20 quick and 20 slow squeezes (hold for 10 seconds), 4 times a day.
- Weeks 7–8: Do 30 quick and 30 slow squeezes (hold for 10 seconds), 4 times a day.

Do these exercises while doing things like cooking or working. Be patient, results may be seen within a few weeks.

Extra Help and Tools

- **Apps or phone reminders:** Use apps to remind you to do exercises.
- **Losing Weight:** Losing extra weight helps pelvic muscles.
- **Consult your gynecologist or a pelvic floor physiotherapist:** If you still have problems, ask for help.