



PELVIC CONFIDENCE

Restore your pelvic floor in 4 simple steps





Your pelvic floor is a large muscle located in your pelvis, attached to four body landmarks but completely unsupported by bone. It needs to be flexible enough to allow movement through the passages it wraps around (urethra, anus and vagina) while remaining strong enough to support the weight of the attached organs that sit above it (bladder, bowel and uterus).

There are all kinds of reasons why your pelvic floor might be letting you down, working inefficiently or just not pulling its weight..

In essence, it's not enough to have a strong pelvic floor. We need it to be able to adapt to the nuances of our body's position, remaining strong and supportive as we move. But we also need it to be intuitive enough to relax when we need space for childbirth, intercourse and even regular functions like going to the toilet.

It's not always obvious when your pelvic floor needs a little strength training, because the signs are often things that we dismiss as unimportant or changes that we just need to put up with. However, when you consider that pelvic floor dysfunction is the number one reason for admissions to old age care homes, it becomes an issue that is worth finding just five minutes a day for!

So, how do you know there might be a problem?
Well, let's take a look...





STEP 1

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE

The good news is, there's a range of issues that could be resolved with a little training of the pelvic floor. Does anything here sound familiar to you?

Urgency:

The moment you pull up to the house or put the key in the door do you suddenly and urgently need a wee? Do you manage to hold it or do you sometimes leak as you get closer to the loo? Do you urgently need the toilet the moment you realise there isn't one near by or do you panic if you know you will be far from a loo?

Frequency:

Do you get up more than once in the night needing the loo? Are you someone who has a 'quick wee, just incase' before leaving the house, even if you don't need one. Do you often have a wee and then need another very soon afterwards?

Stress:

Do you leak when you cough or sneeze? Have you ever said the words 'I laughed so hard a bit of wee came out?' and accepted it as funny or par for the course?

Pain:

Do you suffer from painful intercourse or pain inserting a tampon? It is painful when you have bowel movements or do you suffer from constipation?

Lower back ache:

Do you feel a general ache or weakness in your lower back? Do you dismiss it as normal for your age / size / type of job? Did the back ache begin after or during pregnancy or during the menopause?

You don't need to answer yes to all of these questions. Just one could be an issue worth resolving before you get to a point where more and more begin to apply to you.

STEP 2

FINDING YOUR PELVIC FLOOR

If you have got this far then it's likely that one of the previous (or even more than just one) is an issue for you.

The first step to really good pelvic floor health is to 'find' the muscles. And the most simple way to do this is to use the breath. The movement of the diaphragm when you breathe has a direct 'piston-like' effect on the rise and fall (engagement and relaxation) of the pelvic floor muscles. So this is where we will begin.

HOW TO LOCATE THOSE MUSCLES

Let's start by trying to locate the muscles using a really big, long exhale.

Make sure you're sitting comfortably, then take a big inhale and slowly begin to exhale through a small gap in your lips. Feel like you need to push all that air out and take your time. In other words there is some resistance behind your exhale. Make it last 5-8 seconds, or as long as you can.

Effective breathing is the secret to unlocking the path to your pelvic floor



At the beginning of the exhale you won't feel much, but as you get half way, you should feel your tummy muscles begin to tighten. This tightening intensifies as you exhale and you should feel the tightening start to move down your abdomen incorporating some of the muscles below your belly button.

FEEL THE MAGIC

It's at this point that the magic begins... As you blow out the very last few drops of air you will feel the connection travel right into the pelvic floor.

At this point I don't need you to feel a lift, lower, squeeze or anything specific – just something. Anything. We are looking for engagement and awareness. That is all at this stage.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Practice this in a few different positions and most importantly when you breathe **IN** again, make sure you try and relax all these areas once more. Breathe in to your belly and allow it to relax **FULLY**.





STEP 3 DISTRACTION

If you are someone who always needs to know where the nearest toilet is and you struggle with **urgently** or **frequently** needing to get to that loo, there are steps you can take to reduce this to more manageable levels.

To need the loo urgently and frequently is a type of incontinence related to the signals between the bladder and the brain. When we give in to these urges, we are reinforcing the bladder's message that it is full, even though this is not usually the case. In fact, often it is just lazy. And this can be retrained. Take night-time for example. When you are not drinking, there is no reason why you should need a wee three times a night. Remember, the bladder is lazy, not necessarily full.

To begin to overcome this, I would always begin with distraction techniques. Try these over the next week...

- Next time you feel the urge for the loo, commit to doing another job first. Don't give in immediately.
- Next time you urgently need the loo, take a seat and take five deep breaths. The urgency will pass.
- Next time you leave the house for a short trip (30 minutes or less) avoid doing a last wee before you leave 'just in case'.
- Next time you feel the pull to go to the loo – grip and release your toes 10 times.

To assist with all these tips, when you do go for a wee, make it count. Take your time, breathe, relax and fully empty your bladder. Then stand up and move your hips in a circular motion (imagine using a hula hoop). Do this four times in both directions, sit back down and allow your bladder to empty fully again

BYE BYE LAZY BLADDER

This method is called 'double voiding' and helps the bladder to fully empty. Be reassured with the freedom of knowing that even if you feel the urge, you can be confident that it is a lazy bladder signalling, not a full one!

STEP 4 LIFT AND HOLD

To support all of the above, we should be training and strengthening the pelvic floor in the same way we would any other muscle. Here is one recommended way to do just that...

- Take a seat and lean back so that you are a little slouched. Your weight will be resting towards the back of your pelvis.
- On your first exhale, begin the breath by starting to lift into the anus (like you are trying to hold in wind). That's all for now. Keep it gentle with the effort of the lift/squeeze not exceeding 30-50%. If you squeeze too hard, you will introduce other, often stronger muscles.
- Hold this lift for up to 10 seconds. You might only reach 4-5 seconds initially. Don't worry, just do as much as you can. Keep the lift in the back passage only, not squeezing your bum or belly.
- When you have mastered this, you can try to move the squeeze forwards towards the vagina. Start again by trying to hold in wind but as you hold this, feel the connection move towards trying to hold in a wee as well.
- Again, stick to 30-50% effort. You should be able to breathe normally and move other body parts at the same time. Don't tense the whole body.

Consider the following

- Only hold for **up to** 10 seconds. Work up to 10 seconds if necessary.
- Ensure you **release** fully after each lift. Use the inhale to relax.
- Ideally, try this 'lift and hold' 10 times, up to three rounds per day.
- Practice in a variety of positions – standing, sitting, walking, lying, all fours.
- Listen to your body and don't be tempted to over tense or grip. This is a gentle lift.
- If you can't feel a lift or squeeze, consider going back to step two and working on the breath – focusing on the inhale to release might help you and this can be done well in positions like Child's Pose or on all fours. Birthing positions will help to give the pelvic floor the best chance of relaxing.



WANT TO DO MORE?

LET'S STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE

If you follow the steps outlined above you're already on your way to understanding how your pelvic floor functions and implementing some effective new ways to support it.

To fully address any issue with the pelvic floor though, it is important to look at the **CORE** as a whole.

The pelvic floor is one important element of this but to create true, long lasting strength and reliability it's essential that you build and strengthen the whole team of core muscles.

I can help you to master this and show you how to find, engage and strengthen the whole core in my 7 Day Core Challenge.

Developing a strong core will leave you feeling fitter, stronger, slimmer and with a better understanding of how to exercise safely for long- lasting results.

Are you ready?

[Register for the next FREE challenge here](#)





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All of the information contained in this document is accurate according to current guidance, however if you are unsure or feel like you need some further guidance please do consider contacting a women's health physio for a full assessment. 85% of pelvic floor issues can be resolved without surgical intervention, but if you feel any pressure, heaviness or can see/feel changes to the area it's important to seek help as soon as possible.

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