

## PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

- Do you know where your pelvic floor muscles are and what they do?
- Do you lose any urine when you cough, sneeze or run?
- Do you have any concerns with your bowel control?
- Has your doctor ever said you have a prolapse?
- Are you unsure about how to contract your pelvic floor muscles correctly?

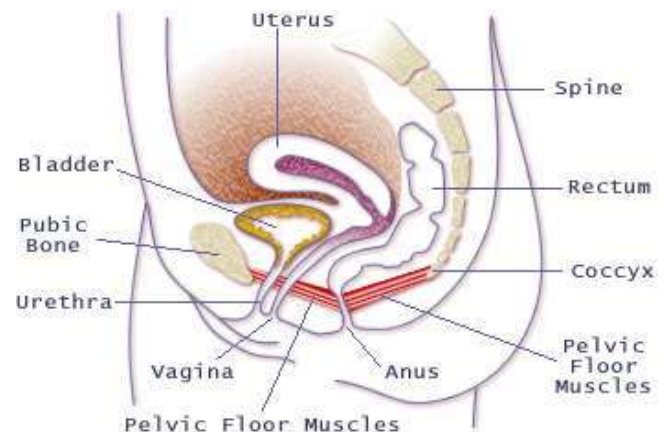
If any of these questions are yes, read on - this information is right for you.

Urinary Incontinence is involuntary leakage of urine. It is very common in women of all ages- from elite athletes to woman post-pregnancy. Research has shown up to 1 in 3 women has urinary incontinence.

In Pilates exercises the pelvic floor is considered an important component of our core. It is very important that you are using your pelvic floor correctly when doing Pilates exercises.

Some women “bear down” or press their pelvic floor downwards when doing pelvic floor or pilates exercises, this faulty technique can lead to increased problems.

The pelvic floor is best imagined as a sling or hammock of muscle inside us. To contract your pelvic floor think of stopping passing water or stopping as fart. Imagine the pelvic hammock is being tightened - lifting up inside you as you contract your pelvic floor.



### EXERCISE: AM I USING MY PELVIC FLOOR CORRECTLY?

To check that you are lifting your pelvic floor correctly, the place one finger on the opening of your vagina. When lifting your pelvic floor muscles you should feel the muscles draw away from your fingers. If you feel pushing down you might not be doing these exercises correctly.

If you are unsure- talk to your instructor or Physiotherapist- we can recommend a local pelvic floor Physiotherapist who can provide a focused approach to strengthening your pelvic floor.

### EXERCISE: PELVIC FLOOR STRENGTHENING EXERCISE

A great exercise for you is to lift your pelvic floor through the day- when driving, walking or when lying down. Imagining you are tightening your inner pelvic hammock- thinking you are lifting a tampon up inside you or stopping a fart can help with getting the right muscles working. Be sure to keeping everything else relaxed – including your bottom muscles.

Try lifting for 8 seconds 8 times, and lifting once holding for 30 seconds- 3 times, every day.