

# Pelvic Floor

## What is the Pelvic Floor?

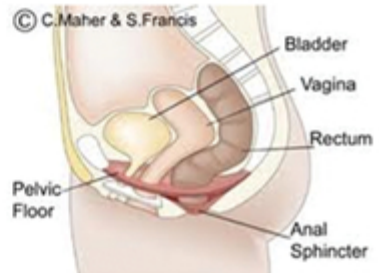
The floor of the pelvis is made up by layers of muscle and tissue. It is a supportive hammock that goes from the pubic bone (at the front), to the tail bone (at the back), it also extends sideways. The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that form the mechanism of closing the front and back passages.

## Your pelvic floor muscles can weaken because of :

- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Constipation
- Frequent heavy lifting
- Being overweight
- Hormonal changes (menopause)

## A weak pelvic floor may mean:

- Inability to control your bowel motions
- Vaginal slackness
- Heavy feeling in the vagina
- Tampons slipping out
- Leaking of urine when sneezing, laughing, playing sports, coughing etc



## How to prevent or minimise a weak pelvic floor

Your pelvic floor can be strengthened by doing particular exercises. These exercises only take a few minutes but must be done consistently to achieve good results. They can be done while watching television, feeding your baby, anytime! Other people can not see when you are doing them. As well as reducing all of the above possibilities, strengthening your pelvic floor gives good support for the rest of your body, and an awareness of your pelvic tone. You will also recover quickly after the birth of your baby.

## How to do it

**Step 1:** Sit comfortably in a chair, with your feet slightly apart. Keep your back straight and maintain a good posture.

**Step 2:** Pretend you are stopping the flow of urine, pull upwards with your muscles. Do not hold your breath.

**Step 3:** Hold the muscles up for up to 5 seconds if you can. If you can't you can work up to it. Rest for a few seconds and repeat.

**Step 4:** Repeat this routine 5-10 times, whenever you think of it.

The process to build up your pelvic floor muscle strength happens over time and with persistence you will notice that you can hold the muscle upward for longer.

## Maintaining good Pelvic floor muscle

It is important to recommence your pelvic floor muscle exercises as soon as possible after the birth of your baby. This increases blood flow to the area speeding up the healing process. Maintain a healthy varied diet, and keep your BMI (body mass index) in the healthy weight range. Drink plenty of water. Regular exercise. Share heavy lifting.

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