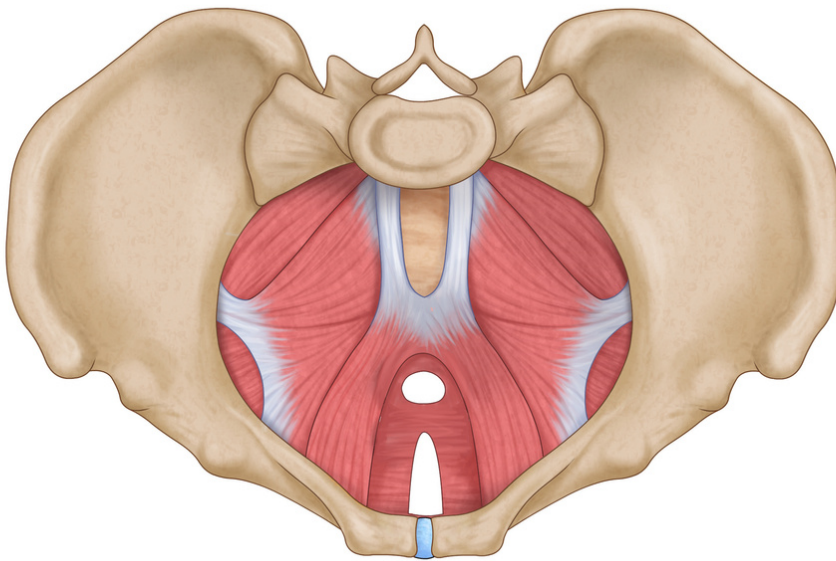


# HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR PELVIC FLOOR

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Having chatted with a few nursery mums about pelvic floor health, it made me realise that it is still a difficult topic of conversation for many women. I also got the sense that many of you wonder what to expect from your pelvic floor muscles and have the golden question **'what is normal?'** So I wanted to write to you to try to answer this question and to also highlight how invaluable it can be to get to know your pelvic floor muscles and make them work well for you as you travel through your life. I also wanted you to know that if you do need help with your pelvic floor muscles, pelvic health physiotherapy is a really safe, non judgemental space for discussing your problem.



So we know that pelvic floor symptoms can develop after having a vaginal birth, if having problems with constipation, from being overweight, if leading a sedentary lifestyle and when negotiating menopause, to name but a few reasons. However, just because you have had a difficult forceps delivery or have had baby number four recently, bladder leakage or vaginal prolapse is not a normal, inevitable consequence of this. And there is so much that we, as pelvic health physiotherapists, can do to guide you into improving your symptoms. It is also really important to consider preventing symptoms from occurring in the first place by doing your pelvic floor muscle exercises regularly, getting some good exercise, having a healthy diet and subsequently healthy bowels.

**Where are my pelvic floor muscles and how should I be exercising them?**

First thing to say, and may be point out the obvious, is that everyone is individual and has a different story to tell, which may affect how their pelvic floor is working. But with regard to how to do the exercises, firstly think about where these muscles are. The pelvic floor muscles are layers of muscle that cover the bottom of the pelvis. They attach from the pubic bone at the front of the pelvis, around the side of the pelvic bones to the tail bone at the back of the pelvis. They also wrap around the urethra (urine tube) and anus (back passage) and pass under the bladder, the womb and the bowel.

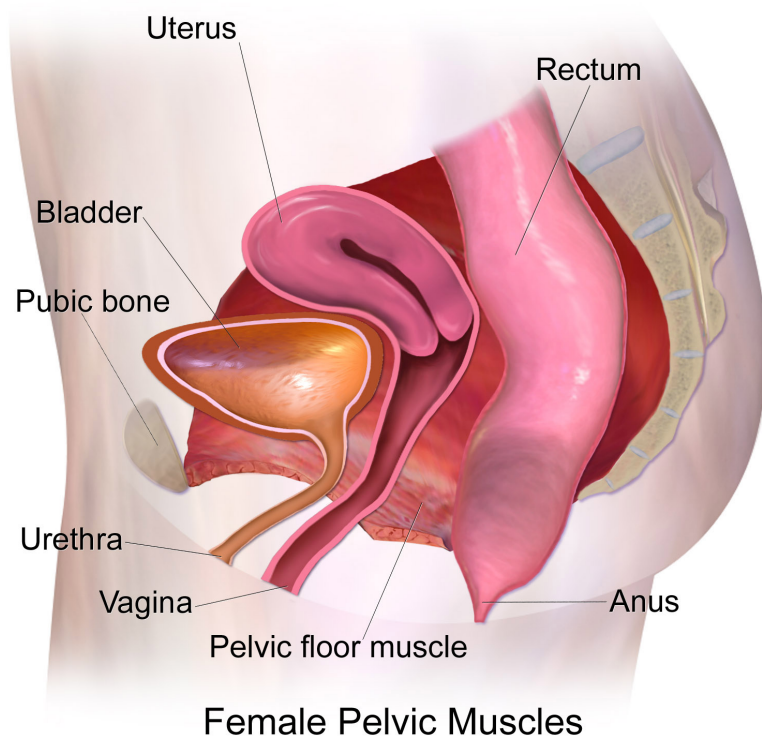


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To exercise the pelvic floor muscles, sit or lie in a comfortable position. If you are sitting, sit upright with your shoulders relaxed. Now think about where your back passage is and try squeezing it together and upwards as if you are going to stop wind escaping. At the same time think about where your vagina is and try to squeeze the muscle here together and upwards too. Now let go of them. Once you think that you can squeeze your pelvic floor muscles in the right way, try **squeezing as tightly as you can** and release. Aim to repeat this 10 times, three times per day. Now try squeezing your pelvic floor muscles together and upwards more gently, with **half of your maximum effort**, and hold for up to 10 seconds. Relax for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times, three times per day. As I said, everyone is individual and how you exercise your pelvic floor muscles will be personal to you, so the above is a rough guide. If it feels easy do more squeezes, if it feels difficult do less squeezes and hold a pelvic floor squeeze for less time.

If you are unsure as to whether you are exercising your pelvic floor muscles correctly or how to go about the right exercise programme for you, then I am here to help assess, advise and support you (see my contact details below).

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