

Pelvic Floor Training

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that sit like a hammock between your tail bone at the back and your pubic bone at the front. In a woman the bowel, bladder and womb are supported by this hammock. The urethra, vagina and back passage pass through the pelvic floor muscles.

It is important to keep the pelvic floor strong in order to be able to control wind and water, and to help keep your back strong.



Your pelvic floor can be weakened through;

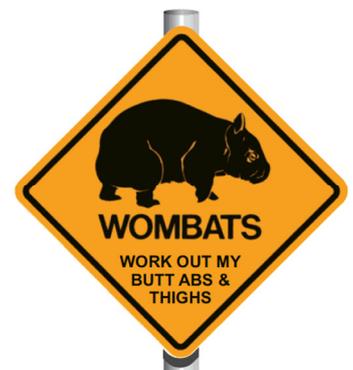
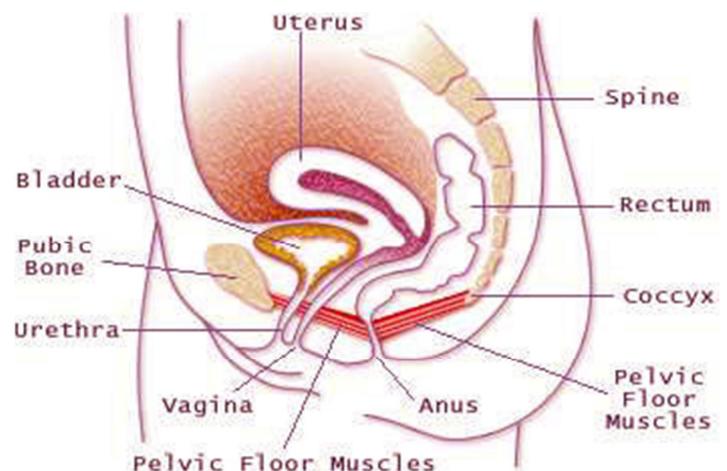
- heavy lifting,
- childbirth
- being overweight
- constant coughing
- constipation
- ageing

Up to one in three Australian women experience urinary leakage when coughing, sneezing, laughing or playing a sport. About half of these suffer in silence due to embarrassment or believing that nothing can be done about it.

How Do I Find My Pelvic Floor Muscles?

Sit or lie down and relax the muscles of your legs, buttocks and stomach. Now squeeze the muscles around the back passage as if trying to stop from passing wind. Do this without squeezing your buttocks.

When passing urine try to stop the stream then start it again. Do this only to find which muscles to use, and not as an exercise in itself.



WOMBAT Fitness

Work Out My Butt Abs & Thighs

PO Box 4279 Myaree WA 6960 - Phone: 0410 499 464 - email: wombat@winthropdc.com

Winthrop Dexterity Consultants Pty Ltd (ACN: 066 742 452) as trustee for The D & J Musgrave Family Trust (ABN: 99 549 336 945) trading as Wombat Fitness (BN: 11175898)

How Do I Strengthen My Pelvic Floor Muscles?

Start by sitting or standing tall and relaxed. Visualise the pelvic floor muscles at the base of your abdomen and lift them upwards and inwards. (I like to think of a soft-drink can. With your diaphragm as the lid and your stomach muscles making the walls of the can, the pelvic floor muscles make the base of the can. Draw up the pelvic floor muscle to make the concave shape found on the base of a soft-drink can.)



Slowly make this contraction and lifting as strong as possible and hold. Continue to keep all other muscles relaxed (legs, buttocks, abdomen, toes, shoulders and face). This is an invisible exercise. Finally, don't forget to BREATHE!

Initially try to hold the contraction for 3 breaths and build up to 5 or more. When you release the contraction and relax there should be a real feeling of "letting go" or even dropping.

Perform 3 sets of 8-12 contractions 3-4 times a week. You can do them lying, sitting, kneeling or standing. Red traffic lights, or TV ad breaks make great opportunities to perform pelvic floor exercises.

How Do I Keep My Pelvic Floor Muscles Strong?

- Practice lifting and engaging your pelvic floor muscles before coughing, sneezing or lifting
- Share heavy loads
- Avoid straining due to constipation by eating a high fibre diet and staying well hydrated
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Limit high impact jumping exercises

Further Information:

If you have concerns about continence or your pelvic floor seek professional advice

Continence Foundation of Australia Free Call 1800 33 00 66 (National Continence Helpline)

www.bladderbowel.gov.au

www.pelvicfloorexercise.com.au

www.physiotherapy.asn.au can help you find a physio

References:

[Pelvic Floor training For Women](#) Continence Foundation of Australia

[Don't Forget The Pelvic Floor](#) Lisa Westlake Group Exercise, Mind Body & Aqua Network Autumn 2007 PP12-13

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