

Women's Health Physiotherapy

Postnatal Pelvic floor

Advice / Education Class



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Women's Health Physiotherapy

- **Self refer up to 4 months** if your symptoms are not improving with intense pelvic floor rehab/Pilates
- Beyond 4 months - If you experience any future bladder or bowel leakage, ask your **GP to refer you to us**
- Further information regarding services, please see website:

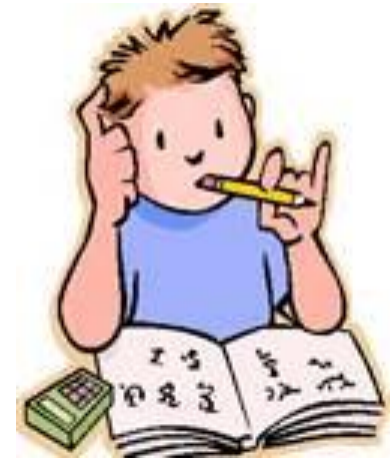
<http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/whphysio>



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Why you're here



- Understanding the pelvic floor - anatomy & function
- How childbirth can affect the pelvic floor
- How to prevent or reverse problems
- What's normal after delivery ?



Don't become a statistic



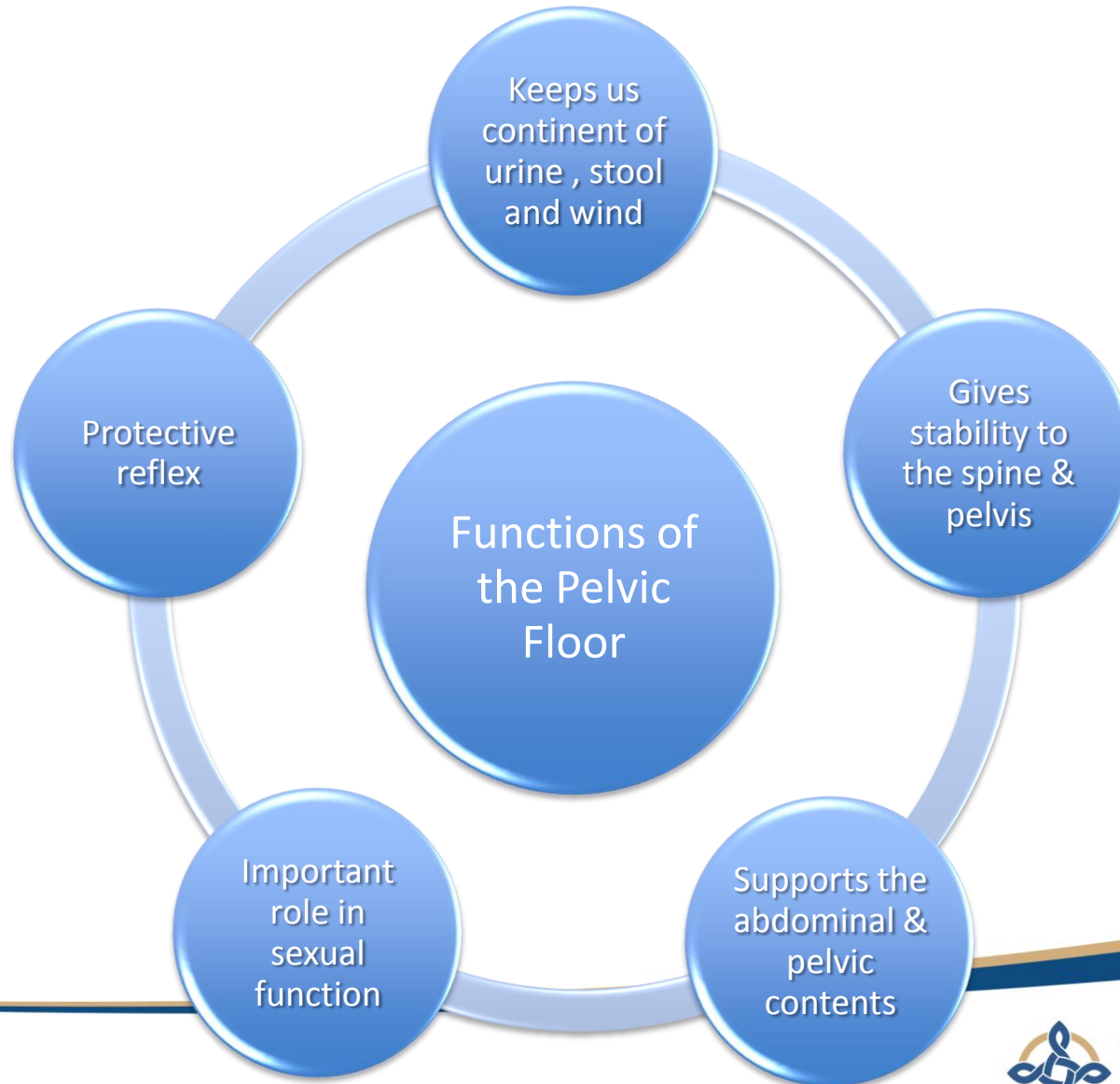
- Up to 50% of post natal women in the UK suffer some degree of incontinence
 - At 3 months post-natal this is still around 30%
- Symptoms may not start until 4-7 months post delivery
- Problems can be prevented or reversed
- 36% postnatal women have a diastasis



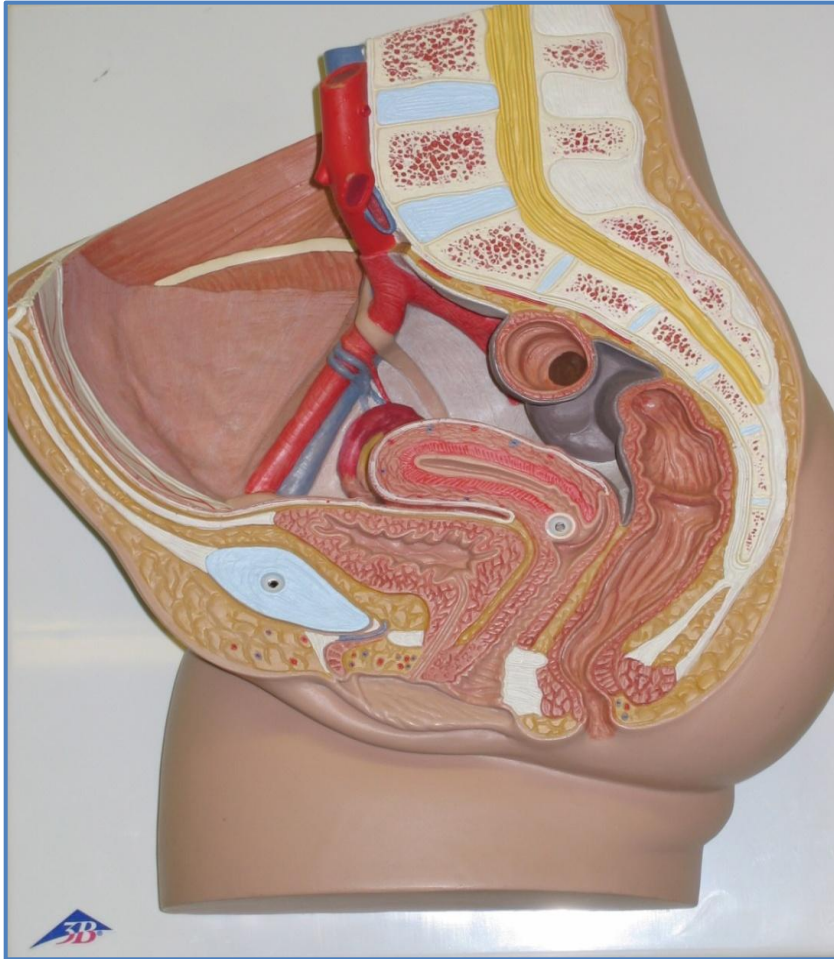
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Pelvic floor function



Where are the pelvic floor muscles ?



Sling of muscle that
passes from the
pubic bone to the
coccyx



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Pelvic floor at delivery

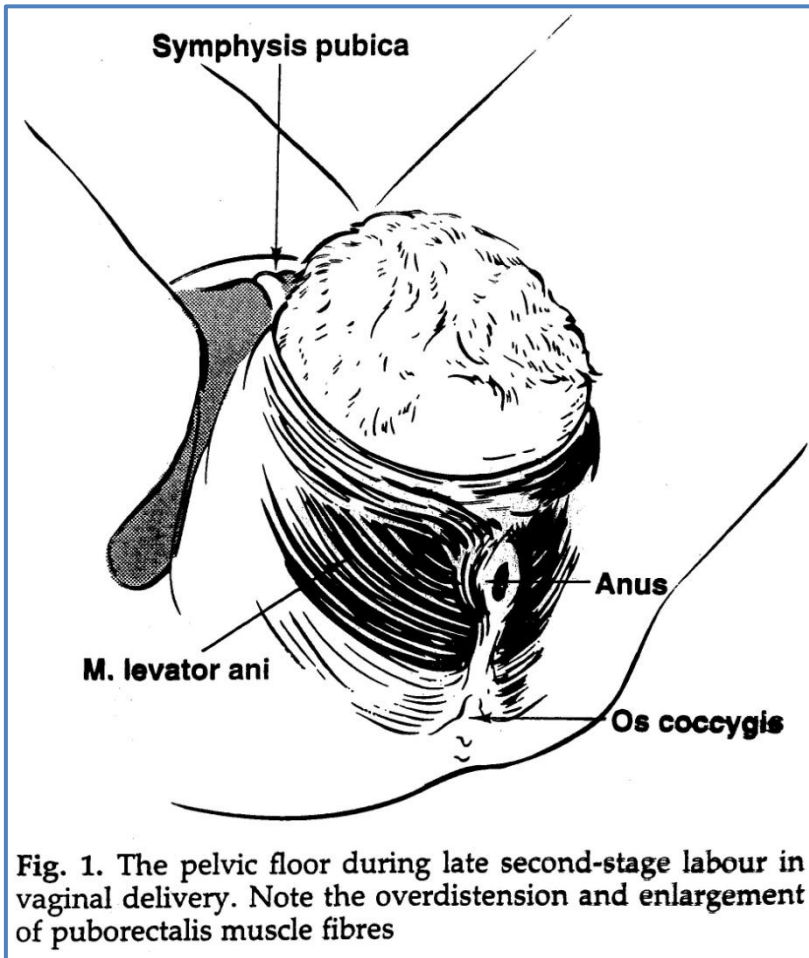


Fig. 1. The pelvic floor during late second-stage labour in vaginal delivery. Note the overdistension and enlargement of puborectalis muscle fibres

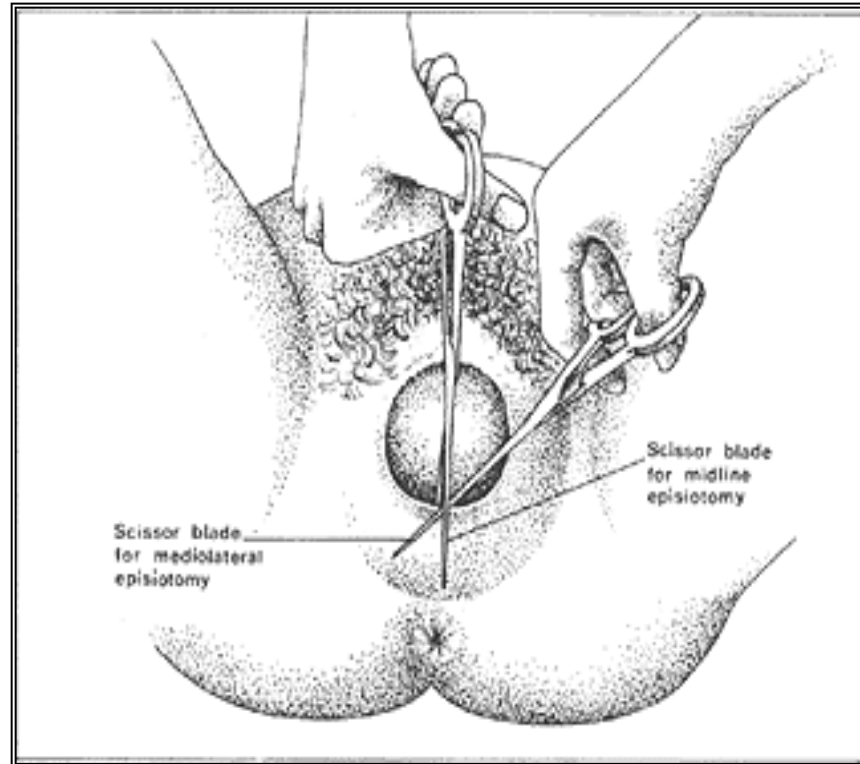


Pelvic floor injury during childbirth

- Bruising
- Swelling
- Perineal tear
- Episiotomy
- Haematoma

- Infection
- Wound breakdown

- Incontinence



Risk Factors

- Large baby > 4kg 2
- Multiparity >1 child 2
- Prolonged pushing >2hrs 3
- Forceps delivery 4
- Episiotomy 3
- 3/4th Degree Tear 6 *
- Epidural/spinal 2
- Twins / triplets 1
- Chronic constipation 1
- Obesity BMI >30 1
- First baby over at >35years 1
- Incontinence 6

Total Score: ??



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Bladder and Bowel Problems

- Lack of desire to pass urine

- Stress incontinence

- Loss of urine during activities

- Urgency

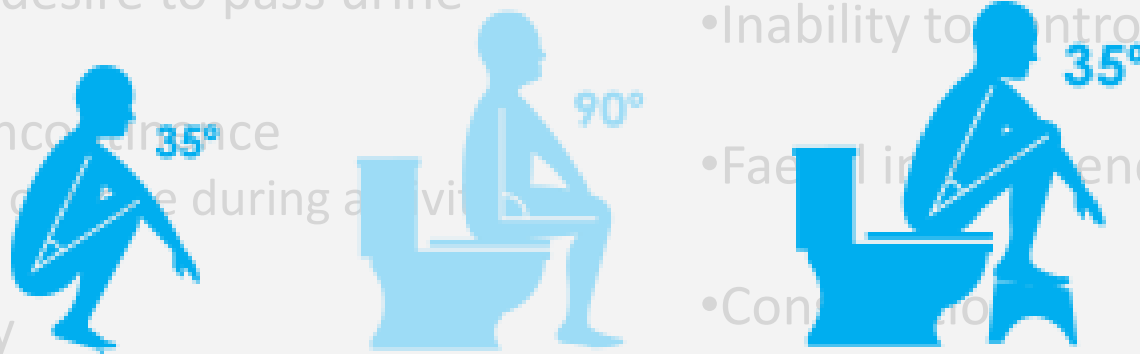
- Increased need to empty the bladder

- Urge incontinence

- Inability to control wind

- Faecal incontinence

- Control of

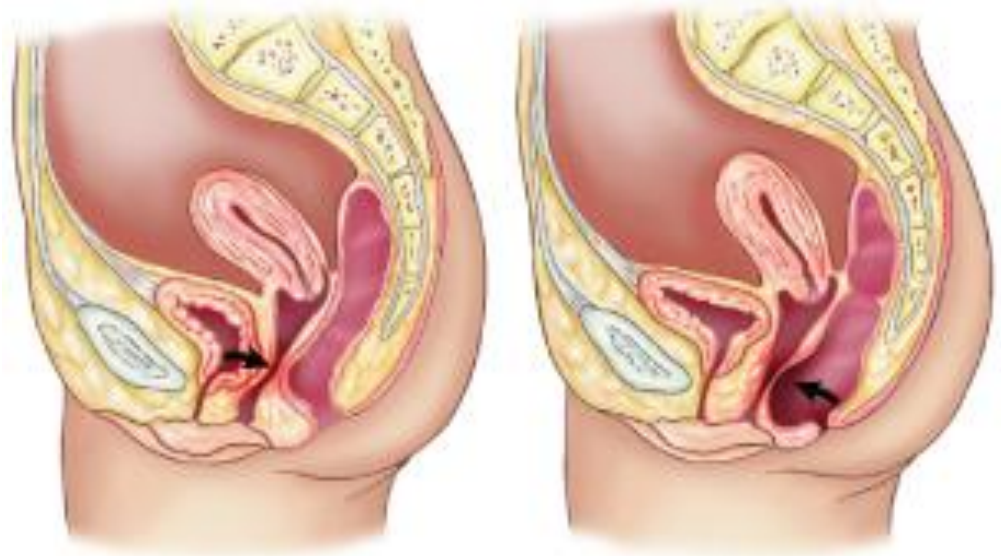


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Vaginal Laxity

- Heavy
- Achy
- Dragging feeling
- Aggravated by walking & standing
- Eased by sitting, supporting & lying



How to perform a pelvic floor muscle contraction

Tighten your back passage as if trying to stop wind

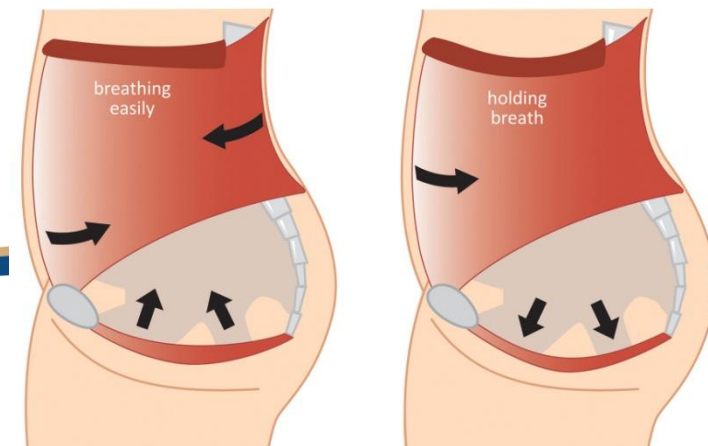
Also tighten the front as if to stop passing urine

The feeling should be a 'squeeze and lift'

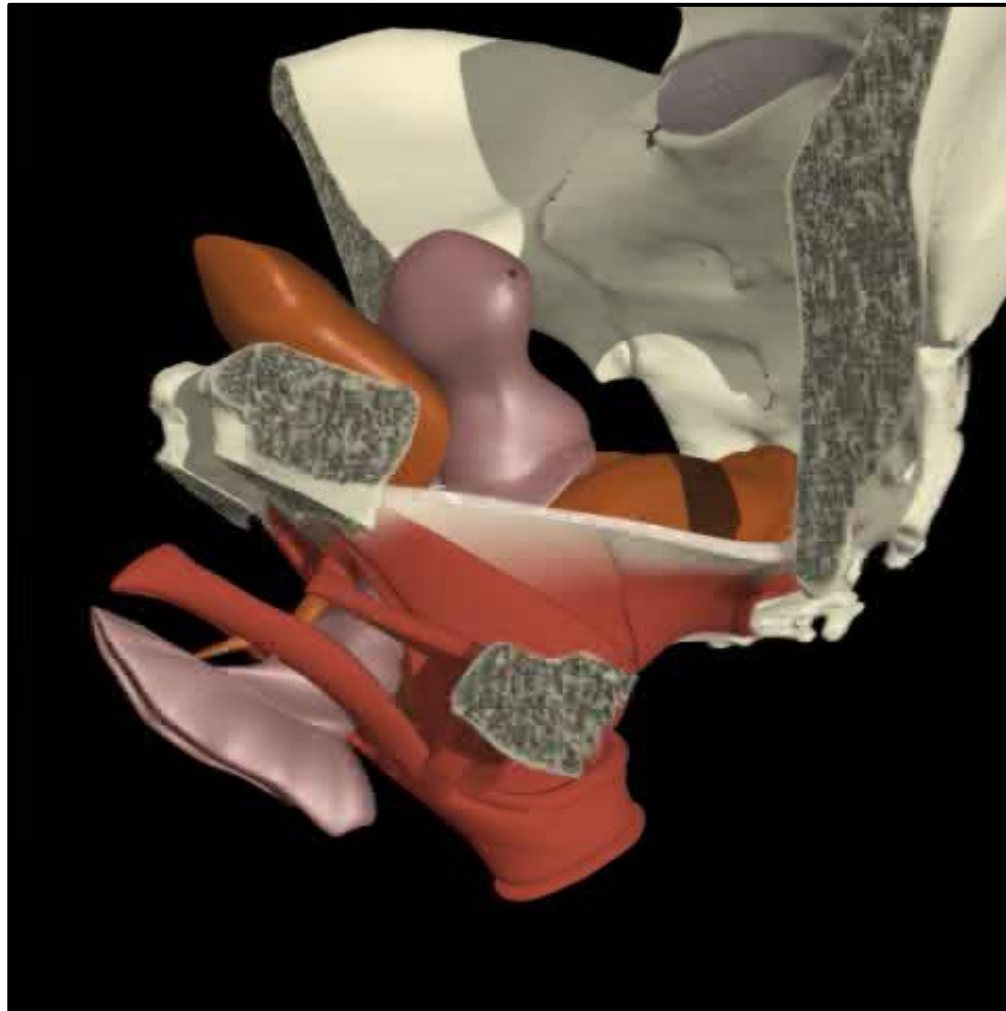
Aim for an up & forward direction

You may feel your abdomen tighten just above the pubic bone

PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE CONTRACTION



Pelvic Floor movement



Two types of exercise



KNACK !

FAST

- Maximum contraction
- On/off like a switch
- Aim x 10

SLOW

- Gentle, gradual contraction
- Holding
- Aim 10secs x 10



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How to progress

- Start lying
- Try sitting
- Build up to standing
- Then with activity / exercise



Practice makes perfect



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Am I doing them correctly ?



50% of us do them incorrectly !

Avoid:

- Breathing in or holding your breath
- Pulling in tummy
- Squeezing legs together
- Clenching buttocks
- Bearing down



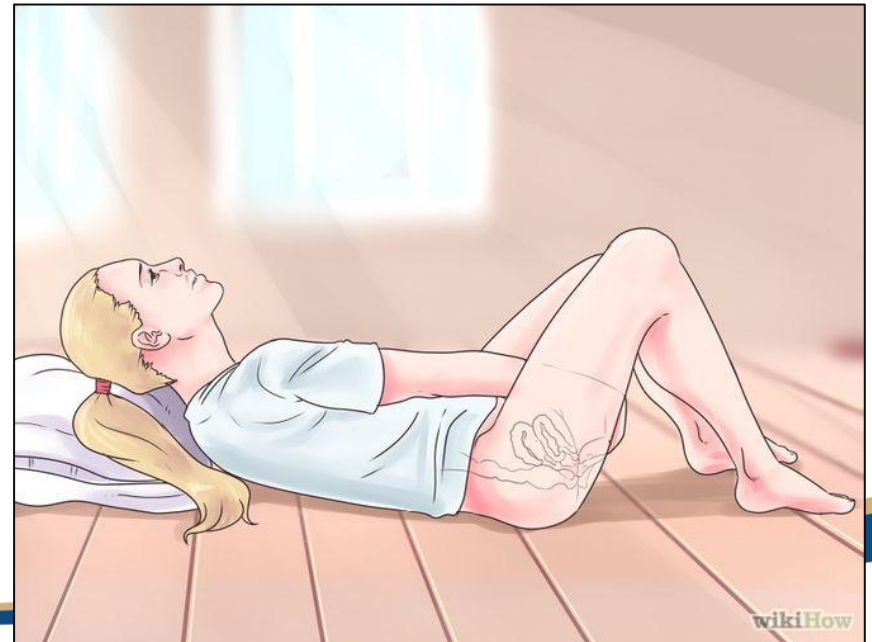
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Can I check myself ?



Do not test with a midstream stop !



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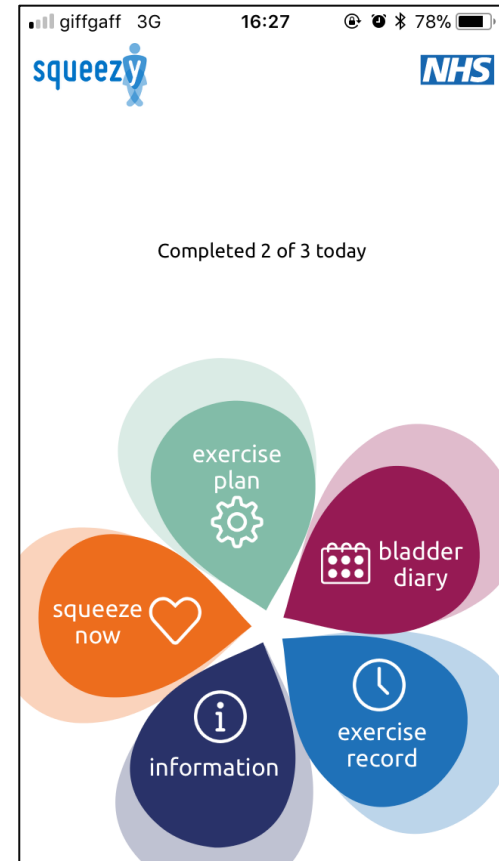
How to stick at your exercises....

- Use an app
- Do them at set times
- Tie it into your routine
- Use post-it notes
- Try Pilates
- Do them when you 'need' to

9 months to delivery

9 months to recover ?

Weak muscles take on average 10 - 12 weeks to strengthen

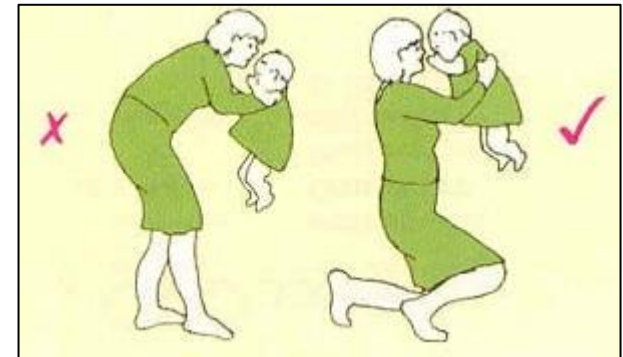


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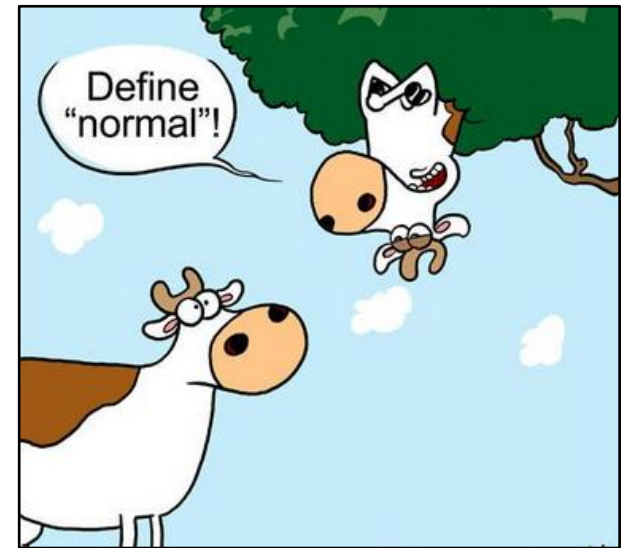
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Be kind to your pelvic floor

- Lifting
 - Correct technique using stronger leg muscles
 - Avoid repetitive heavy lifting or get help
 - Use the **knack**
- Posture
 - Helps to utilise your pelvic floor muscles
- Pilates



What is normal?



- Vaginal laxity/gapping

- Vaginal wind

- Scar tenderness

- Scar tightness

- Ache, heaviness, bearing down pressure

- Discomfort during intercourse

- Haemorrhoids/piles → **Pharmacist**

Pelvic floor exercises

Scar massage

Pacing activity



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What's not normal?



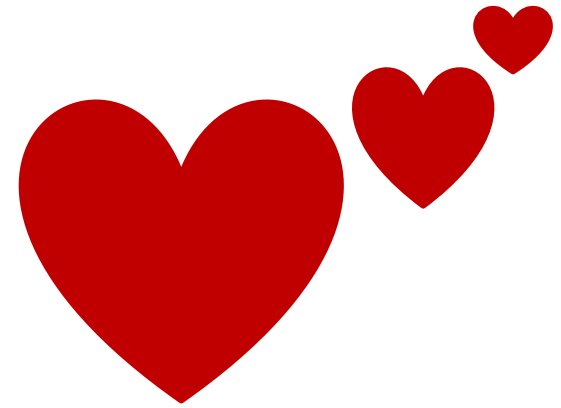
- Incontinence
- Scar bleeding
- Scar pain when passing urine
- Pain with intercourse or opening bowels
- Perineal heaviness



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Getting Back to Sex



- Using lubrication
- Accidental exercise for pelvic floor
- Helps with scar tissue and desensitisation
- When you feel ready, it is usually comfortable to return to intercourse at about 8 weeks



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DRAM Drop-in



- Mondays 2-3pm
- Sports and social centre
- Opportunity to ask a physiotherapist about :
 - Pain related to pregnancy/delivery
 - Returning to exercise
- DRAM assessment



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What's next?



- PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISE -are you doing enough ?
- **Self refer up to 4 months** if your symptoms are not improving with intense pelvic floor rehab/Pilates
- Dram drop-in
- If you experience any future bladder or bowel leakage, ask your **GP to refer** you to us



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Thank you for listening



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Make friends with your pelvic floor

