

QUALITY OF LIFE PHYSIOTHERAPY UPDATE



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Contents:

- Pelvic Floor Muscles and Incontinence

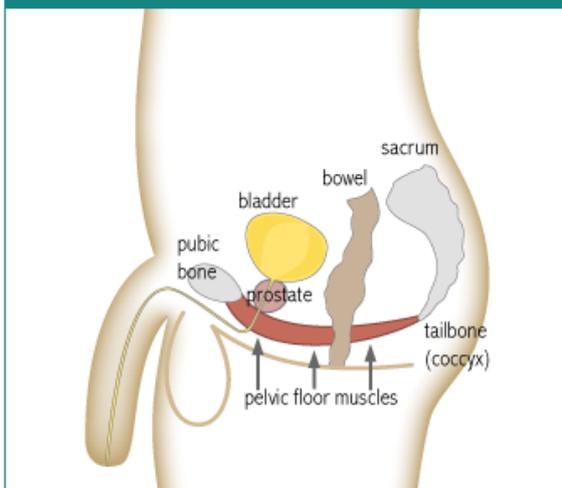
Pelvic Floor Muscles and Incontinence

Incontinence is an issue that can affect both males and females and span through all ages from early childhood bed wetting to adult induced exercise incontinence to elderly incontinence.

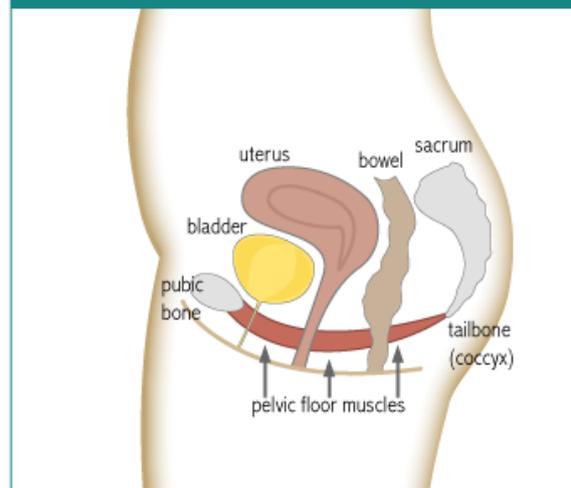
Incontinence is defined as '**any accidental or involuntary loss of urine from the bladder (urinary incontinence) or bowel motion, faeces or wind from the bowel (faecal or bowel incontinence).**'

Bladder and bowel control is reliant on your *Pelvic Floor Muscles* functioning correctly. Your pelvic floor muscles are made up of several layers of muscles and connective tissue. Your pelvic floor muscles run from your tailbone to the pubic bone and help to hold up your sexual organs, bladder and bowel. Weakness or dysfunction of your pelvic floor can lead to leakage of your bladder and bowel and movement (prolapse) of your organs.

MALE PELVIC ORGANS AND STRUCTURES



FEMALE PELVIC ORGANS AND STRUCTURES



www.sequencewiz.com

How does your pelvic floor muscles become weak or dysfunctional?

- Not keeping them active
- Being pregnant and having babies
- Constipation
- Being overweight; poor physical activity
- Heavy lifting, including excessive weight lifting at the gym
- Coughing that goes on for a long time (such as smoker's cough, bronchitis or asthma)
- Growing older
- Surgery involving the bladder and bowels

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Services Offered:

- Physiotherapy
- Back and neck care
- Sports injury management
- Orthopaedic rehabilitation
- Exercise rehabilitation
- Acupuncture
- Ergonomic assessments
- Manual handling training
- Pilates mat classes
- Living Longer Living Stronger
- Massage

How can physiotherapy help?

Incontinence is a condition that can be managed and not a condition you can't do anything about. Your physiotherapist can begin your pelvic floor rehabilitation by providing you advice and exercises to improve your control. We can also refer you on for further help if necessary. But in the meantime follow the steps below (www.continence.org.au) to help get your bladder and bowel under control:

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Cutting your fluid intake can actually make your incontinence worse as this will result in a more concentrated urine, which can lead to irritation of bladder and causes you bladder to want to empty. It also important to reduce alcohol, caffeine and fizzy drinks, these are irritants to bladder and bowel. Drinking 6-8 cups (1.5 -2 L) of fluid throughout the day (unless medically advised not to), and additional amounts if exercising and in hot weather. Majority of the fluid intake should be water as the water dilutes the urine, making the urine less irritable to bladder. Along with drink plenty of fluids a healthy diet with good fibre content helps prevents constipation and excessive straining and stretching of the pelvic floor.

- **Exercise** regularly to maintain healthy bowel movements. Exercise stimulates the action of the bowel. Exercise to maintain a healthy body weight is also important to avoid straining your pelvic floor muscles with excess body fat. Exercise your pelvic floor muscle to maintain good healthy tone and strength. Even though you might not have incontinence doing your pelvic floor muscle exercises can also be prevention tool to prevent future leakage.

- **Excessive coughing** can cause weakness of pelvic floor muscles, the repetitive increase of lung pressure can put pressure on your pelvic floor. Avoiding activities such smoking and controlling respiratory conditions can help reduce your risk of incontinence.

- **Good toilet habits.** When you feel the urge to open your bowels that is the most effective time to do so. Delaying the opening of your bowels can create a build-up of faecal matter in the bowels. When going to the toilet get into good posture. You may need a foot stool to help get into good position.

And a key thing is relax your stomach and allow it bulge out, don't strain or push hard, allow your body to work naturally.

For bladder health avoid going to the toilet 'just in case', this can lead to the bladder shrinking in size. Normal bladder volume is 400-600ml of urine (the sensation of needing to empty occurs at 200-300 ml)

- Get **urinary tract infections under control** as soon as possible to avoid irritation and changes to good bladder health.



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