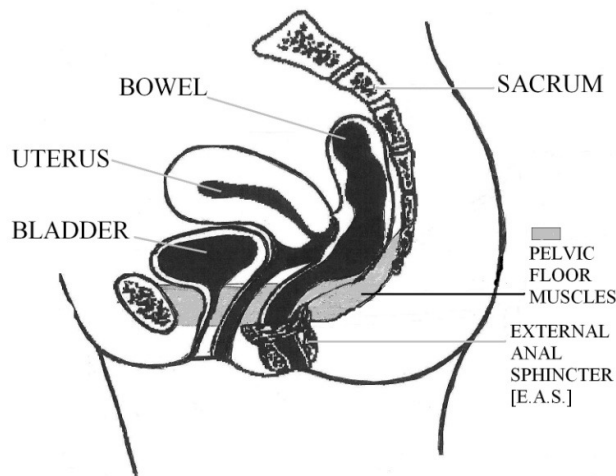


PELVIC FLOOR PHYSIOTHERAPY

THE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES : WHERE ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

The pelvic floor muscles are needed for support of the bladder, womb and rectum. They are part of the muscular support system needed to maintain good posture and healthy joints. They are important in sexual intercourse for arousal, performance and orgasm. It is important to know you are exercising the right muscles in the right way.



WHAT IS PELVIC FLOOR PHYSIOTHERAPY?

Pelvic floor physiotherapy is the assessment and treatment of pelvic floor muscle problems. Bladder problems, urine leakage, feelings of prolapse or difficulty controlling your bowels, can all be signs of pelvic floor weakness. If you have only one or several of these symptoms, it is likely that you would benefit from improving your pelvic floor muscles.

Pelvic floor problems can occur at any age, to both men and women. The pelvic floor can be damaged or weakened by many of the normal things that happen to us through life. These can be natural events such as pregnancy, childbirth, the menopause and ageing. Other factors affect the pelvic floor, such as prostate surgery, gynaecological surgery, back injury, chronic constipation, chronic cough, obesity, heavy lifting or long periods of inactivity.



EXPLANATION OF THE PELVIC FLOOR ASSESSMENT PROCESS

ABOUT YOUR FIRST PELVIC FLOOR APPOINTMENT

THE HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please fill in as much detail as you can ***before your appointment*** and don't forget to bring the both the consent form and the completed history questionnaire with you!

THE CONSENT FORM

This is sent to you before the appointment so that you can make a considered decision about consenting to the assessment process. You will be able to change your mind during the consultation.

The assessment process has two parts; the subjective and the objective.

The subjective part involves asking questions about personal details and how your problem is affecting your life. This helps the physiotherapist to understand the nature and severity of your symptoms.

The objective part is the physical examination, which can be either a vaginal or anorectal examination, or both.

A vaginal examination enables the physiotherapist to feel the action of the pelvic floor muscles with a gloved finger inside the vagina.

An anorectal examination involves the insertion of a gloved finger into the back passage to feel the action of the pelvic floor muscles and the anal sphincter.

These examinations are very important to planning your treatment and provide the physiotherapist with a lot of information about your particular problem. They may not be necessary in every case. In situations where the client does not consent, the physiotherapist will in most cases be able to give valuable individual advice.

The examinations are done with sensitivity, attention to hygiene and according to professional guidelines. You are under no pressure to consent and may change your mind at any time. You may bring another adult with you to be present during the examination.

THE TREATMENT

The physiotherapist will then discuss with you a proposed plan of treatment based upon her assessment. The treatment options may include some of the following: - lifestyle advice, exercises, electrical stimulation, and biofeedback.