

The Female Pelvic Floor

- The pelvic floor consists of nerves, fascia and three layers of muscles
- These muscles start at the pubic bone and go to the coccyx (tailbone)
- The five key functions of the pelvic floor are:
 1. Support for the organs
 2. Sphincter-continence for bladder and bowel
 3. Sexual -orgasm and erection of the clitoris
 4. Stability- strength and coordination for low back pain, pelvic girdle pain and hip pain
 5. Sump pump-helps to pump your blood and lymph back to the heart

How To Locate Muscles

- Pretend to stop the flow of urine (Imagine drawing a raisin into the urethra)
- Pretend to hold in a tampon (imagine drawing a ping pong ball into the vagina)
- Pretend to stop the release of gas (imagine drawing a marble into the anus)
- During a pelvic floor contraction you should feel the muscles pull in and up
- Do not hold your breath
- Avoid using your legs, buttocks or stomach muscles (these are compensations)
- If anyone is looking at you, they should not be able to tell that you are contracting your pelvic floor muscles; if they can, then you are using some of the compensation muscles listed above
- Do not practice by stopping the flow of urine while you are on the toilet (this may prevent complete emptying of your bladder and contribute to a urinary tract infection)

Other Suggestions

- Insert 1 or 2 fingers into your vagina to feel the contraction or tightening around your finger
- Place a finger on the anal opening to feel the tightening of the area
- Use a mirror to look at the movement
 - You should see a lifting of the perineal body (the area between the vagina and anus)
 - You should see closing/tightening around the openings
 - No bulging should occur in the area
 - You should not see tissues coming out of your openings

