

THE HEALTH & FITNESS NEWSLETTER



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PELVIC FLOOR THERAPY AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

You know the importance of regular check-ups at the gynecologist, like annual women's wellness exams and cancer screens. But did you know that physical therapy also plays a vital role in women's health?

As physical therapists, we're experts in the body's entire musculoskeletal system – including your pelvic floor, a set of muscles that serve as a "hammock" for your pelvic organs (bladder, bowels, and sexual organs). Many difficult-to-discuss women's health concerns, such as incontinence or sexual dysfunction, stem from issues in the pelvic floor.

Pelvic floor physical therapy is a specialized type of PT that focuses on these pelvic issues. At Elevate Physical Therapy, we offer pelvic floor rehabilitation services in a discreet, non-judgemental environment – ensuring you find the relief you deserve.

Today, we want to explore all the ways your pelvic floor can have an impact on your day-to-day life. But if you want more personalized guidance, call our clinic to schedule an appointment with one of our pelvic floor specialists!

Exploring Pelvic Floor Dysfunction

Your pelvic floor muscles are just like any other muscles in your body. They can become tight and restricted, or they can be too weak to do their job properly. Both situations can lead to a variety of women's health concerns:

- Pelvic pain – which sometimes manifests as lower back pain
- Urinary incontinence, including "leaking" when you laugh or cough, frequent urination, increased urgency, and so on
- Pain or diminished sensation during sex
- Pelvic prolapse, which occurs when your pelvic organs slip out of position
- Bowel issues (such as constipation)

Your pelvic floor also plays an instrumental role in pregnancy and childbirth, and the process can have a big impact on your pelvic floor

muscles. If you're pregnant or postpartum, many common discomforts (such as pelvic pain or urinary incontinence) can be traced back to the changes in your pelvic floor post-childbirth.

Going through menopause? Your pelvic floor is, too! Menopause causes changes throughout the body, including decreased muscle mass, which can cause your pelvic floor to weaken. When combined with other changes in your body, you may begin to experience symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction, including a higher risk of pelvic prolapse.

Pelvic Floor Therapy to the Rescue

We know these pelvic floor issues can feel overwhelming. Fortunately, pelvic floor therapy offers several solutions to help strengthen or stretch your pelvic floor muscles, helping you find relief from symptoms.

We'll work closely with you to understand your health history and specific pelvic floor difficulties. That way, we can develop your customized treatment plan. Here are some of the interventions we might include:

- **Pelvic Floor Exercises:** Have you done your Kegels today? While this classic exercise is one of the most well-known ways to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles, we can show you other movements as well, such as toe taps. We can also help you stretch those muscles to ease any restrictions.
- **Biofeedback:** We can also take your pelvic floor exercises to the next level using biofeedback technology, which provides real-time imaging of your pelvic muscles to ensure you activate the correct ones during exercises.
- **Bladder/Bowel Training:** If you're struggling with incontinence, we can help you train your bladder or bowel to reduce episodes. For example, if you frequently need to urinate, we can develop a plan to help you go further and further between bathroom trips.

Sources: https://www.physio-pedia.com/Pelvic_Floor_Dysfunction; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK559246/>



- **Manual Therapy:** Certain hands-on techniques can help relieve pelvic pain, such as trigger point therapy (unknitting tender "trigger points" in the body's soft tissue), myofascial release (working out tight fascia), or joint mobilization (guiding joints through their range of motion).
- **Pelvic Floor Education:** One of the difficulties of pelvic floor dysfunction is the shame that can surround many of the symptoms – and the lack of information about the condition. We'll help you understand what is happening in your body and provide a safe space to discuss your symptoms and treatment.

Learn More About Pelvic Floor Therapy

Pelvic floor therapy plays an essential role in women's health. Regardless of what you may have heard, you don't have to live with symptoms like urinary incontinence or sexual dysfunction. Pelvic floor therapy at Elevate Physical Therapy provides comprehensive treatment so you can live a life free of pelvic dysfunction!

Scan the QR code to make an appointment!



HEALTHY RECIPE

GREEN SMOOTHIE

- 3/4 cup milk of choice
- 1 small frozen banana
- 1 tablespoon nut/seed butter of choice
- 3 cups baby spinach
- 2 scoops protein powder of choice

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.



<https://www.humnutrition.com/blog/post-workout-smoothie-recipes/>

EXERCISE ESSENTIAL

Strengthens Your Pelvic Floor

ABDOMINIS BRACING WITH PELVIC FLOOR CONTRACTION

Start by lying on your back with your knees bent. Contract your pelvic floor muscles. Gently draw your belly button in toward your spine to brace your inner abdominal muscles. Make sure to keep your back straight and do not hold your breath. 2 sets, 1 rep, 30 seconds hold.



If you are not sure about how to do this exercise, please consult with your physical therapist before starting.

PT WIRED
www.ptwired.com

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Bekah Wetter

Physical Therapist

Bekah was born and raised in Orange City, IA where she participated in volleyball and basketball. Her first exposure to physical therapy (and what fueled her passion for helping others) was her rehab experience for the multiple ankle injuries she sustained while playing basketball. She ventured a distant 15 minutes from home for her undergraduate degree at Dordt University where she majored in Exercise Science. Bekah then attended Des Moines University for her Doctorate of Physical Therapy degree. "I am passionate about helping patients and getting them back to what they love to do through movement. Movement is vital and it is a joy to see patients achieve their goals when they move in ways they did not think they would be able to." Bekah enjoys spending time with her growing family, hanging out with friends, being outdoors, and traveling (or dreaming about traveling) in her spare time.



Alyssa Bolger

Physical Therapist

Alyssa joined Elevate Physical Therapy in 2014 after graduating from Marquette University and returning to the Des Moines area, where she grew up. She has two young children, who have inspired her to provide more education and support to new and expecting mothers. Her goal is to help everyone be active participants in their care, and to feel heard and supported in their choices. There is not always one right choice regarding health care needs. Alyssa likes to work with each person to find what will fit best into their lifestyle, or to help them figure out how to change certain aspects when they are ready to make that change. There are many aspects of pregnancy, postpartum recovery, and menopause that are not frequently talked about, such as urinary incontinence, pelvic pain, and hormonal changes. She strives to provide a comfortable environment to discuss these concerns, and provide insight for how to improve various conditions that are impacting how a patient is feeling and functioning. With Alyssa's background in coaching, and being an athlete in her youth, she brings an active, functional mindset into her treatments. She has also pursued a certification in lifestyle medication in order to provide each patient an individualized, full body, holistic assessment. She prides her work on partnering with patients to educate and provide tools to help themselves feel better. She doesn't just want them to function, she wants them to thrive! When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her husband and children, drinking good coffee, gardening, foraging, finding new parks and outdoor activities, and baking!



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

"I saw Alyssa for Pelvic Floor PT and she was **amazing!** I started seeing her mid way through pregnancy and she helped me stay active throughout my pregnancy, addressed pains and discomforts and helped me prepare for labor by practicing positions and different stretches etc. I returned back after having a C-section and she helped me with muscle recovery, scar mobilization and eventually the Return-to-Running assessment. She has such a gentle and comforting approach that made me so comfortable to address any concerns I was feeling with my body and make me feel confident throughout pregnancy and postpartum! She was even willing to rock and hold my baby when I needed to bring him to one of my appointments 🥰. The entire PT clinic is so professional from the front desk to the PTs. Can't recommend enough!!"

— Elsa S.

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ELEVATE PHYSICAL THERAPY
AND SPORTS MEDICINE