

It is highly recommended that you see a Women's Health Physiotherapist when you are approximately 6-8 weeks postpartum. This type of appointment is called a post-natal physiotherapy assessment.

What does this actually involve?

The main aims of this check is to see how you are recovering after your pregnancy and delivery. Often we don't know what is considered normal or not normal after we have a baby. In this appointment your physiotherapist will clear this up and go through things such as:

- Bladder issues (incontinence/leakage, urgency, pain, decreased sensation, stop/start issues, emptying)
- Bowel issues (constipation, urgency, incontinence (wind or stool), pain issues, haemorrhoid management)
- Pelvic organ prolapse (ie. are you at risk of this)
- Return to sex (scar massage, any pain issues)
- Ongoing pelvic pain issues (rectal pain, vaginismus, perineal pain, pelvic girdle pain)

- Pelvic floor exercises and pelvic floor muscle assessment
- Abdominal wall recovery (rectus diastasis recovery)
- Return to exercise guidance

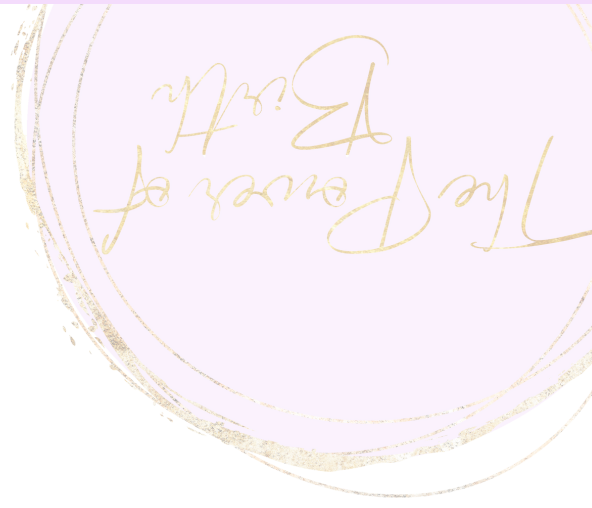
This information was provided with the help of Claire Ryan (Physiotherapist, Pelvic Health). For particular questions, you can find her at The Living Well Studio, Burleigh Heads or John Flynn Private Hospital

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Why you **NEED** to see a Women's Health Physiotherapist

The Power of Birth



Pregnancy and childbirth can often have many impacts on our pelvic floor area of our body. Often pelvic floor weakness commences in pregnancy and then the stretch that occurs during a vaginal birth can lead to more. Although cesarean births don't experience this stretch they have still had the pregnancy part of it meaning you aren't exempt from pelvic floor issues.

This guide aims to increase your understanding of on pelvic floor issues and the importance of recovering post baby! At the moment a lot of people wait until they have pelvic floor issues to get help however we are aiming to shift this to get help PRIOR to reduce your risk.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

- ☐ Leakage/weeing yourself (at any time - ie, coughing, sneezing, with rushing to the toilet, exercising?)
- ☐ Rushing to the toilet (for either wee or poo?)
- ☐ Losing control of your bowel or wind?
- ☐ Feeling something uncomfortable in the vagina?
- ☐ Such as heaviness, pressure?
- ☐ Painful sex?

The above things are not normal after you have your baby so mention symptoms to your physiotherapist.

It is important to remember that our bodies change and can weaken as we get older / have more babies so the job of your physio is to also think of 'future you' and prevent any issues happening over time. You may feel fine after you have your baby now however some of these issues can happen in the following years. This is why getting a women's health assessment once a year can help prevent issues later down the track!

How do I know I am doing my pelvic floor exercises properly?

This is a very common question and a good one! Correctly doing your pelvic floor exercises is crucial to preventing any dysfunction.

- 1 Connect your brain to your pelvic floor area.**
- 2 Tighten / squeeze your vagina and back passage as if you are holding in wee or wind. Then feel a lift of that area upwards (do not let your bottom cheeks, legs or stomach muscles take over. No one should know you're tightening your pelvic floor when looking at you).**
- 3 Hold it for approximately 5 seconds (while you keep breathing). Then let it relax.**
- 4 To make sure you have relaxed it take a big belly breath in between.**
- 5 Repeat 10 more times..**

This is a simple guide to one type of strengthening pelvic floor exercise however keep in mind it might not suit what your pelvic floor needs. What your specific pelvic floor muscles need will be discussed and practiced in your appointment so you know you are doing the right thing for your recovery!