

# Your Pelvic Health and the Menopause

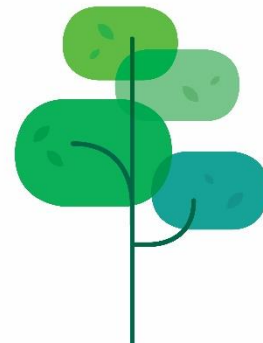
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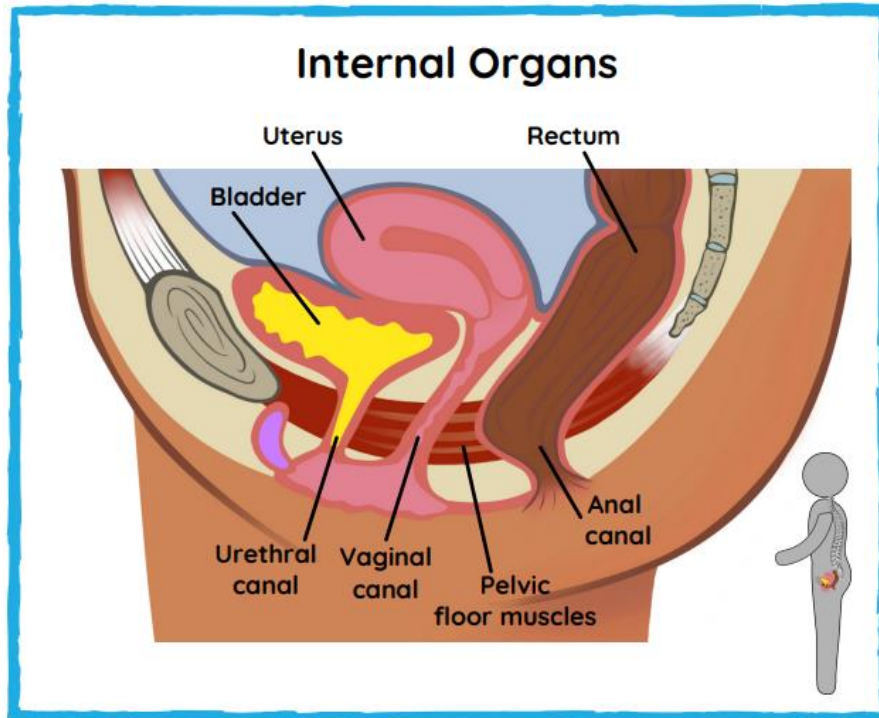
**Regional Clinical Lead Physio for Pelvic Health – NHSE midlands perinatal**

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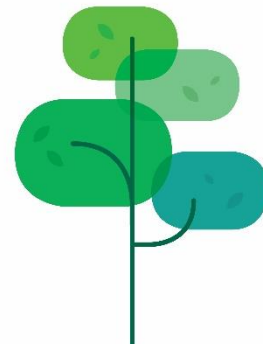
Good



# Pelvic Health Overview

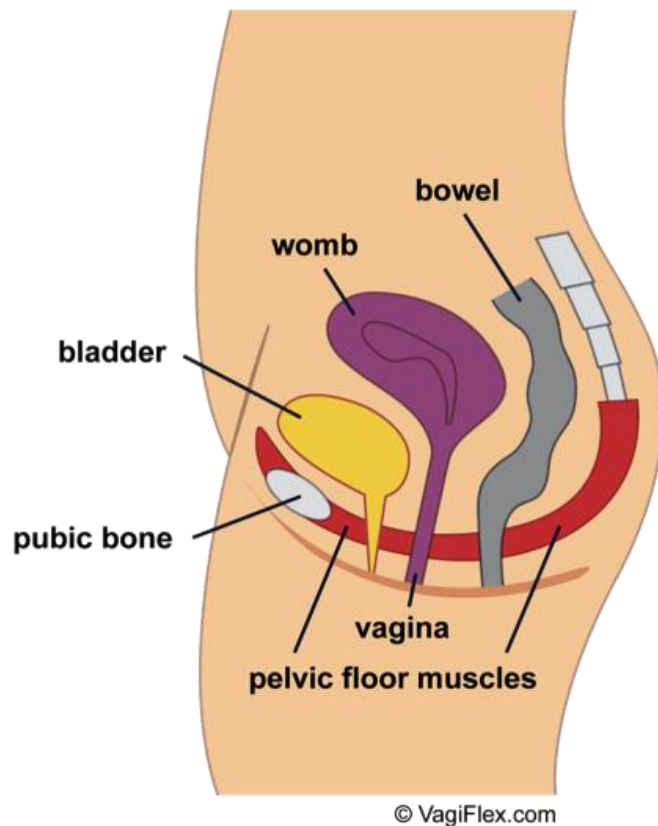


- The Menopause can be a risk factor for worsening pelvic health disorders
- **Genitourinary Syndrome of the Menopause (GSM)**
- As we age the structure and function of our urinary and genital systems changes
- The pelvic organs and their supportive musculature are “Oestrogen responsive”
- Collagen production controlled by Oestrogens

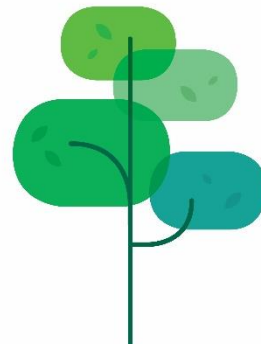


# Pelvic Health Overview

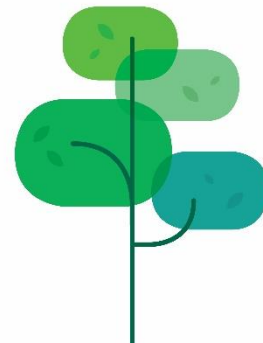
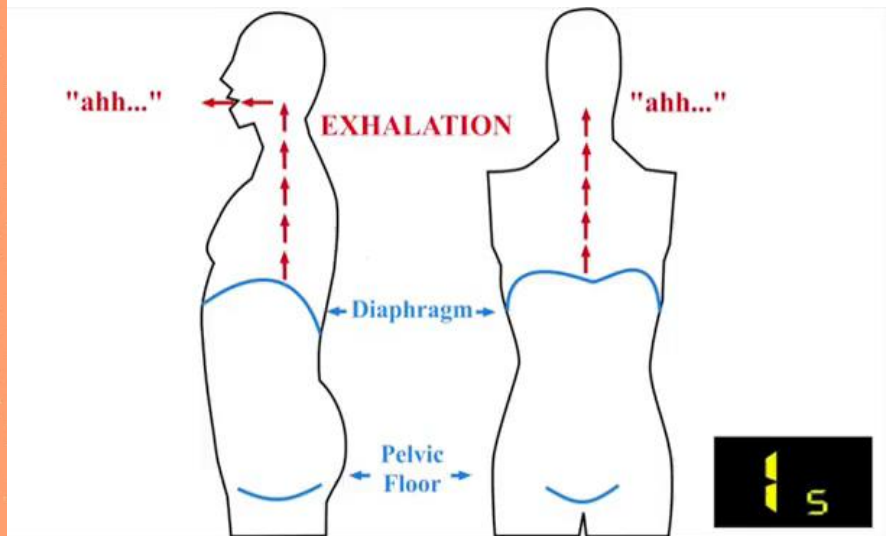
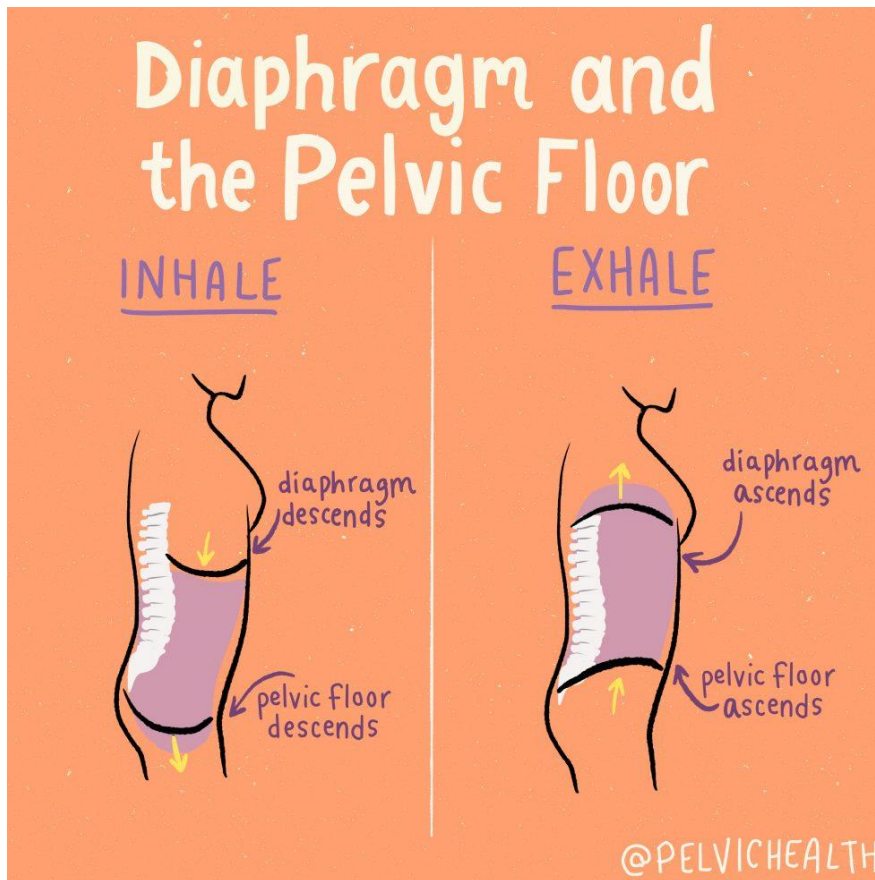
- What even is my Pelvic Floor?!!



- The pelvic floor muscles are the layer of muscles that support the pelvic organs and span the bottom of the pelvis
- Strong pelvic floor muscles give us better control of our bladder and bowels and support the pelvic organs
- Effects of menopause = thinner, less elastic, less supported

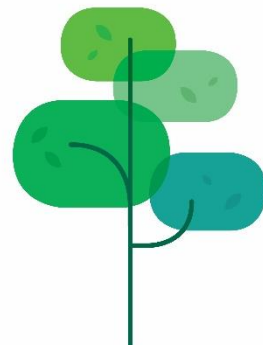


# I'm a physio... audience exercise participation is mandatory!



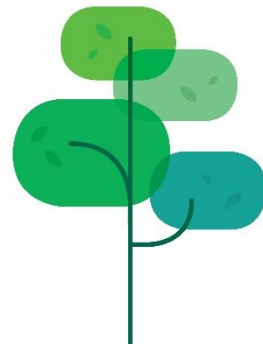
# Bladder Function...

- Between 3 and 6 million people in the UK suffer from some degree of urinary incontinence
- Due to the effects of pregnancy, childbirth and menopause, women are FIVE times more likely to suffer from incontinence than men
- Yet only 1 in 5 women seek help



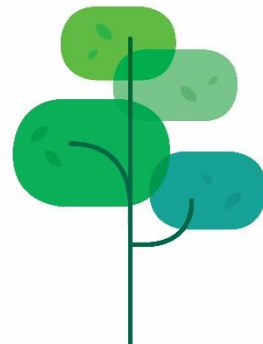
# Bladder Function...

- Although very common, it is not normal
- Shouldn't be considered "inevitable"
- Treatment is often very effective and relatively simple
  
- Bladder problems are not "the price you pay" for being a woman!!!

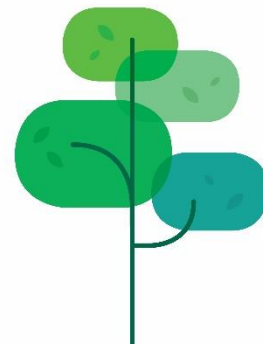
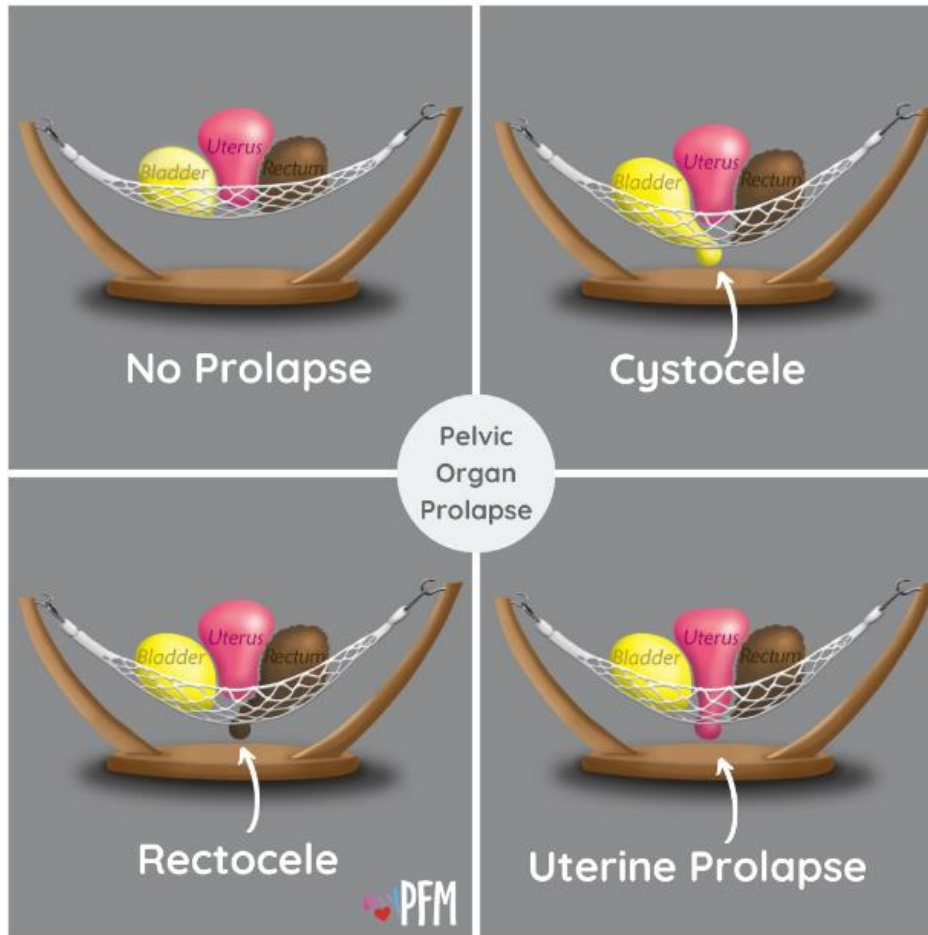


# Bladder Function..

- Two main types of leakage:
  1. **Stress Incontinence** – Common during perimenopause. LOTS of evidence supporting PFM strengthening to reduce.
  2. **Urge Incontinence** – Sometimes associated with “over active bladder” – topical Oestrogens have been shown to provide some benefit here along with PFM training



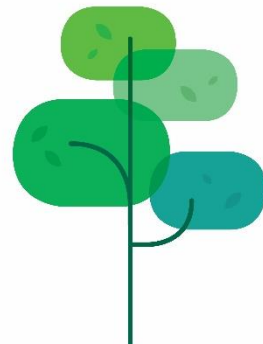
# Pelvic Organ Prolapse...





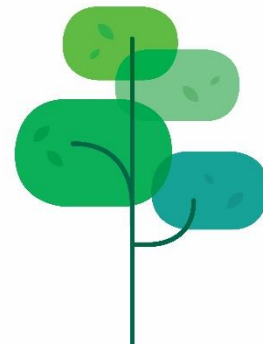
# What can you do?...

- The evidence is clear... some simple lifestyle changes and pelvic floor muscle strengthening can prevent or improve the symptoms of Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause
- NICE guidance and a strong evidence base support early referral to a Pelvic Health Physiotherapist or Continence Advisory Service for mild-moderate continence issues/prolapse



# Help!... Give these a go...

- Reduce caffeine intake (max ● per day!)
- Ensure you're drinking *enough* (1.5 – 2 litres/day)
- Avoid high impact exercise with SUI/POP until seen physio – weight bearing exercise doesn't have to mean jumping!
- Avoid “just-in-case” urination
- Try some simple bladder retraining “when did I last go?”
- Avoid constipation
- Most important: Pelvic Floor Exercises!



# PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE TRAINING

## ✘ 6 Common Mistakes



## ✔ How to Correct Them

### MISTAKE

Squeezing the wrong muscles



### CORRECT

Identify & isolate the pelvic floor muscles to start training

### MISTAKE

Straining, holding your breath, or pushing down



### CORRECT

Breathe and lift the floor up, closing the openings

### MISTAKE

Squeezing extra muscles when working on isolating



### CORRECT

Keep the hips, buttocks, and legs quiet

### MISTAKE

Wrong starting position



### CORRECT

Weak: gravity-assisted position  
Strong: exercise against gravity

### MISTAKE

Performing in isolation only



### CORRECT

Integrate with activity (progress as able)

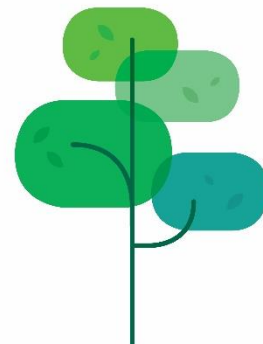
### MISTAKE

Practicing quick flicks only



### CORRECT

Practice strong quick squeezes, endurance holds, gentle butterfly holds, and letting go completely



# Pelvic Floor Exercises...

- Lots of options – electrical stimulation, biofeedback, weights/cones
- Always start with the basics (free!)
- Remembering is half the battle – Squeezy App
- Start today... Start Simple...

3x per day 5x 5 second hold. 5x “quick flicks”



# References & Sites...

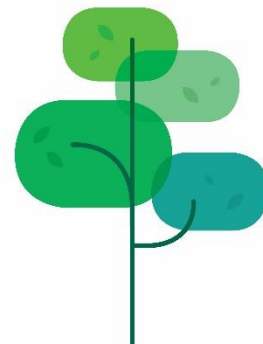
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- [Menopause | POGP \(thepogp.co.uk\)](http://Menopause | POGP (thepogp.co.uk))
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A decorative background featuring several figs and fig slices on a vibrant red background. The figs are dark purple, and the slices show the reddish-pink interior. A white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the main text.

**May your  
coffee,  
pelvic floor,  
intuition and  
self-appreciation  
be strong**

