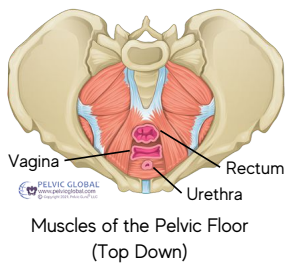


# How pelvic floor physical therapy supports you through pregnancy

...and how to navigate care during each trimester



## What is the pelvic floor, and what is a pelvic floor physical therapist?

The pelvic floor is a vital and under appreciated group of muscles that form a supportive sling in the base of the pelvis. It is part of our "core" system and serves important functions such as bowel & bladder control, sexual function and childbirth. Pelvic floor physical therapists are experts in understanding how the pelvic floor works within the larger system of our bodies, and some therapists undergo advanced training to support the unique changes and challenges that occur throughout pregnancy, delivery, and the postpartum period. Read below to learn how pelvic floor PT provides support throughout your pregnancy.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

### We help you from the start

- Have questions about how to stay active throughout your pregnancy? That's our specialty.
- Are you experiencing aches, pains or leaking? You don't have to "just deal." We help with that, too.
- Establishing care early on is beneficial:
  - We recommend interviewing your pelvic floor PT during your first trimester to find the right fit
  - 4+ week waitlists are common
- Our focus is on helping you feel strong and confident throughout each trimester.

Check out these suggested questions to ask your future pelvic floor PT



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

### We help you build strength & confidence

- Are you experiencing hip, back, or pelvic symptoms? While this is common as baby grows, pelvic floor PTs resolve these challenges through focused strength work and movement education.
- Confused about what physical activities are still "safe" during this time? We take the guesswork out of this too. Pelvic floor PTs help you:
  - Safely evolve your movement routine, or help you create a new one.
  - Teach you how to build strength in your core, hips and pelvic floor to support the physical changes happening in your body.
  - Already have little ones at home? Learn effective strategies to lift a toddler, push a stroller, or carry a car seat while pregnant.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester

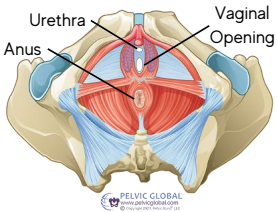
### We help you prepare for birth & postpartum recovery

- Unsure about what movements are still supportive and appropriate for your body at this time? Pelvic floor PTs are your guide.
- Want to know how to best prepare your pelvic floor for labor and delivery? We bring a unique perspective to:
  - Hip-opening techniques, perineal massage, birthing positions, and breathing/pushing strategies.
- Want to feel prepared for your early postpartum recovery? Pelvic floor PTs proactively educate on:
  - How to best support your healing, regardless of delivery method
  - Gentle movements to reconnect and activate your core from day one
  - Useful accessories like compression garments and toileting tools
- Future Planning: schedule your postpartum PT appointments before your delivery - for 6 to 8 weeks out - to support your recovery process.



# How pelvic floor physical therapy supports you postpartum

...and how to navigate care after delivery

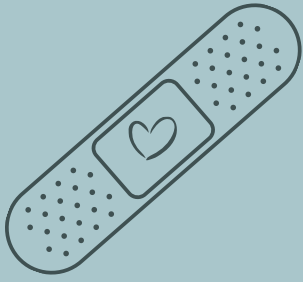


Muscles of the Pelvic Floor  
(Bottom up)

## I just had a baby, do I need pelvic floor physical therapy?

Yes! Your body went through nine months of changes and transformations with regular follow-ups throughout your pregnancy. Postpartum care deserves the same thoughtfulness. It shouldn't be your job to know how to "ease back into things" and "listen to your body" without additional guidance. Pelvic floor PTs fill this unique role by helping new and seasoned mothers navigate their healing and return to exercise beyond the "6 week all-clear" with an intentional plan. Read below to learn how we help you recover and prepare for what's next.

## 0 - 6 weeks Postpartum



### We help you from the start

- If you've been seeing a pelvic floor PT during your pregnancy...
  - Then you will have a recovery roadmap to guide you.
  - You will know restorative movements and breathing techniques to use to help reconnect with your body and promote early healing.
- Don't have a pelvic floor PT on your team yet? That's OK!
  - We recommend proactively scheduling your pelvic floor PT appointments for 6-8 weeks out from your delivery, if possible.
  - Request a referral from your birthing provider at your 6-week checkup. Don't be afraid to advocate for the care you deserve.

### Did you know... at 6 months postpartum

25% of women still experience **pain with sex**



33% of women still experience **urinary leaking**



50% of women still experience **low back pain**



These symptoms are prevalent because postpartum care ends too soon. **Advocate for the care you deserve.**

## 6-week checkup



### We help you rebuild strength & confidence

- Feeling unclear after getting the "all clear"? You're not alone. Pelvic floor PTs help translate what "easing back into activities" means for you personally by creating an individualized strength and movement plan that:
  - Prepares you for the heavy lifting of parenthood
  - Gets you back to moving/exercising in the ways you enjoy
- Regardless of your delivery method you deserve specialized care. Pelvic floor PTs support: vaginal & C-section healing, scar tissue management, back/hip/pelvic pain, bowel & bladder control, and pain with intimacy.

## Beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> trimester



### We help you build strength for what comes next

- Parenting is heavy lifting, literally! That's why we teach you how to lift safely and incorporate strength training regularly into your movement routine.
- Still experiencing symptoms months or years after giving birth? Know that it's never too late to work with a pelvic floor PT.
  - Typically, more strength and coordination are needed between the hips, abs and pelvic floor to address many lingering symptoms.
- Preparing for a future pregnancy? Work with a pelvic floor PT to gain the extra strength needed to lift your toddler while carrying your growing baby

Motherhood is **HEAVY** lifting



Learn how to do it safely and effectively.

