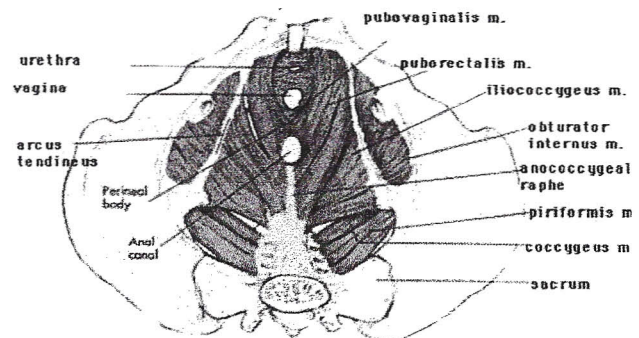




OLYMPIC PHYSICAL THERAPY

Peak Performance. Cutting Edge Techniques.

Pelvic Floor Training



LOCATION: The pelvic floor muscles are like the bottom of a bowl, with the bones of the pelvis

making up the sides of the bowl. The muscles attach to the sides and join at the bottom of the floor, like a muscular sling. These muscles connect the tailbone and the pubic bone to the sides of the ilia (pelvic wings).

PURPOSE: The pelvic floor muscles support the contents of the abdominal cavity including the abdominal and pelvic organs. They help in bowel and bladder control as well as sexual function. When the pelvic floor muscles are contracted, they help to stabilize the lower back, the trunk, and the sacroiliac joint. Supporting the abdominal and pelvic contents helps to reduce the downward pull of gravity of these contents, and thus the pressure on the lower back. Utilizing a pelvic floor contraction can help assist in activating the transversus abdominis and the multifidus muscles.

TECHNIQUE: Remember these muscles are internal. You should only feel tension between your pubic bone and your tailbone to isolate these muscles. Slowly and gently contract these muscles as if you are drawing that sling upward and inward, into your pelvic cavity. Avoid using your abdominals, gluteals, or inner thigh muscles to cheat! Gently contract using the cues below (On a scale of 0-10, with 10 being strongest, your contraction should be about a 2). Your back, legs or pelvis should NOT move. Hold the contraction for at least 10 seconds or longer.

You should be able to contract this isometrically in any position (lying, standing, sitting, etc).

Helpful Cues:

- Gently contract as if you are trying to shorten the distance between your pubic bone and tailbone
- Gently contract as if you are trying to slow down the flow of urine or prevent passing gas.
- Tactile Cues:** make sure you cannot feel your abdomen tighten or your ribs move, and keep your inner thigh muscles and buttocks relaxed.
- Men: contract to gently lift your scrotum or testicles.
- Women: contract to pull the vaginal wall inward and up, like you are holding in a tampon
- "Kegel" or elevator exercises: Think of the pelvic floor like an elevator. Relaxed is the lobby, and as you gently contract from 1-10 in strength, think of lifting that pelvic floor like an elevator up each level to the 10th floor (maximum contraction). Practice going to each floor and holding for 10 seconds. Randomly switch from floor to floor: 2, 6, 4, 9, 7, 5, 1, etc. Slowly return to each floor to learn control.

Progression: Increase the hold time, contracting while brushing your teeth or while talking on the phone, while sitting at a stoplight, or when doing normal tasks (picking up a bag of trash, opening a heavy door, while working out.) If you are doing cardio or weights in the gym or running or walking for exercise, you should make sure this muscle is turned on and engaged before every repetition and during each exercise!