Pelvic Floor Muscles and Continence

A resource to assist health professionals access information about pelvic floor muscle exercises for continence

Developed by the Home and Community Care (HACC)/Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) Continence Project

August 2010
# Table of Contents

- **Introduction** ........................................................................................................... Page 2
- **Websites** .................................................................................................................. Page 3
- **Books** ........................................................................................................................ Page 6
- **Education Resources** ............................................................................................. Page 11
- **Journal Articles** ...................................................................................................... Page 13
Introduction

This resource has been developed to support health professionals to access resources and information about pelvic floor muscles and continence. The document does not purport to be a complete list, and readers requiring more information are encouraged to undertake their own data base search. In particular, there have been innumerable journal articles and books written about the pelvic floor. We are grateful for the input of physiotherapists for their assistance in limiting the journal articles and other resources listed in this document to those that are particularly useful.

The information in this resource is specifically for health professionals. Readers are referred to the Continence Foundation of Australia for client resources on pelvic floor muscle education, which can be accessed via www.continence.org.au or the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.

Private publications and websites available on this topic have not been listed in this resource, but may be relevant for health professionals.

If you identify a resource which may be suitable for inclusion in a future edition of this “Pelvic Floor Muscles and Continence” resource, please provide the details to the HACC/MASS Continence Project team at contpro@health.qld.gov.au
Websites

1. Australian Department of Health and Aged Care: HealthInsite

This Australian Government website aims to improve the health of Australians by providing easy access to quality information. The website has an A-Z of health topics with an extensive data base of direct links. It also contains information on conditions and diseases, health and wellbeing, life stages and events, and Australian health services. There is a link to information on pelvic floor muscles. The website provides access through HealthInsite to public summaries of the Cochrane Collaboration’s reviews of the evidence.

www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Pelvic_Floor_Muscles

2. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

This website provides links to government and other websites for both the public and health professionals. Enter “pelvic floor” in the key words box for information, fact sheets, publications and contacts.

www.health.gov.au


The National Continence Management Strategy is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. This website provides information for health professionals, service providers and researchers on bladder and bowel problems. There are numerous links to other continence related websites, including sites providing support and help. The website includes the contact details for the National Continence Helpline, and has a link to pelvic floor information. There are brochures for English and non English speaking people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Information is provided on incontinence with links to fact sheets, publications, contacts, support and help. Go to health professionals/service providers/researchers headings in the web site.

www.bladderbowel.gov.au

~3~
4. **Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA)**
   
   This website has information for health professionals and the general public and on incontinence and pelvic floor muscle exercises.
   

5. **Bladder and Bowel Foundation (B&BF) United Kingdom**
   
   This website has information on continence symptoms, treatment and pelvic floor muscle exercises for women and men. It discusses doing the exercises as part of the daily routine. Follow the website prompts of bladder, healthy bladder and pelvic floor exercises to access information.
   
   [www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org)

6. **Continence Foundation of Australia (CFA)**
   
   The Continence Foundation of Australia raises awareness of, and advocates on behalf of, people with bladder and bowel problems and their carers. The website provides information on available resources, links to other websites and a phone contact for the National Continence Helpline. The helpline is a nation-wide free service staffed by a team of continence advisors, who provide confidential advice regarding bladder and bowel control. For specific information on pelvic muscles, go to “continence information” and select “living with incontinence” and “pelvic floor muscle exercise” for links to information and resources for health professionals.
   

7. **Queensland Government Queensland Health**
   
   This website has information for health professionals and the general public on pelvic floor muscle exercises. Type in the search words “pelvic floor muscle exercises” in the search engine to link to the information available.
   
8. The Royal Women’s Hospital Melbourne

This website provides general women’s health information and includes urogynaecology and gynaecology fact sheets from A - Z.

The Physiotherapy Department has information about pelvic floor anatomy and exercises and includes a step by step guide to pelvic floor muscle exercises.

[Website Link]

9. West Australian Government Department of Health Population Health Unit

This website has information on a range of health topics. Go to ‘Health topics A - Z’, select ‘W’ then ‘women’s health’ to find a brochure on pelvic floor muscle exercises for women, which includes clear, easy to read information on the pelvic muscles at work, signs and symptoms of weak muscles, self help, exercises and maintaining strong pelvic floor muscles.

[Website Link]
Books


This book contains comprehensive information on incontinence and pelvic floor dysfunction, and is compiled by multidisciplinary experts in clinical practice from international locations.


This book provides information on female pelvic floor dysfunctions, including urinary incontinence, other lower urinary tract conditions, disorders of the anus and rectum, and disorders of pelvic support. The book reviews relevant anatomy, describes clinical examination and diagnostic tests, and provides current information on the diagnosis, physiology, and medical and surgical treatment of specific disorders.


This book has a focus on bridging science and clinical practice. The conservative treatment of physical therapy is discussed with evidence based background information supporting practice.


This book offers multidisciplinary guidance on the diagnosis and management of the full spectrum of pelvic floor disorders. It covers conservative management of the lower urinary tract including pelvic floor muscle exercises

This book highlights that, while it is common to exercise many parts of the body to stay fit, very little attention is paid to exercising the pelvic floor. The book provides treatment ideas and options, including pelvic floor muscle exercises.


This book enhances the understanding of the structural and functional significance of the pelvic floor. It provides treatment suggestions and a multifactorial approach to the topic.


This book comprehensively examines aspects of evaluation and therapy of female pelvic floor dysfunction. It focuses on urinary incontinence and other voiding dysfunctions, including faecal incontinence and other distal gastroenterological problems, genital and rectal prolapse, and other recognized pelvic floor problems.


Aimed primarily at specialist continence physiotherapists, continence advisors and urology nurses, this textbook includes chapters covering the male pelvic floor, anatomy and physiology of the lower urinary tract, urinary incontinence, pelvic pain in men, conservative treatment, medication, faecal incontinence and male sexual dysfunction. It includes an extensive review of the literature up to 2005 on post-prostatectomy treatment and treatment of sexual dysfunction. The subjective and objective physiotherapy assessment is covered chronologically, to enable the clinician to conduct a meaningful investigation and arrive at a logical diagnosis.

This book takes a comprehensive approach to incontinence, and includes a thorough description of the structures of organs, muscle and tissue requiring retraining to overcome incontinence. The author uses professional practice background as a physiotherapist to develop an innovative physical program and series of exercises to improve bladder control. The author also offers useful encouragement and personal insights into broader issues of incontinence and erectile dysfunction.


This book is a practical guide highlighting the varying forms of pelvic floor disorders. Included are chapters on the pathophysiology of the female pelvic floor, the evaluation and diagnosis of problems, the practical management of symptoms, and the complications that can arise from surgical and medical treatment.


This is a classic textbook in the field of coloproctology that covers a range of topics from embryology to investigations to pelvic floor function. It is highly recommended for a more detailed study of the pelvic floor, especially with reference to rectal function.

Home and Community Care (HACC)/Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) Project (2010). *First steps in the management of urinary incontinence in community-dwelling older people: A clinical practice guideline for primary level clinicians (registered nurses and allied health professionals)* (3rd ed.): Australia: Queensland Health. *Section 11.5.5.2*.

This clinical practice guideline is written for primary level nurses and allied health professionals to assist in the initial assessment and management of urinary incontinence, this is an essential reference for all clinicians working with people who have urinary incontinence. This evidence based clinical practice guideline is designed to inform health professionals about urinary incontinence.

This clinical practice guideline is written for secondary level clinicians who have undergone post-graduate training in continence, or who have a special interest and experience in continence management. Section 10 provides evidence based information on pelvic floor muscle training, while section 12 covers adherence issues relating to pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation management.


This book by a Queensland based physiotherapist provides a guide for improving pelvic support, bladder control and staying active, and shows fitness exercises that will not damage the pelvic floor. It is available from www.pelvicfloorexercise.com.au


This book provides a practical clinical introduction to the assessment and conservative treatment of pelvic floor disorders in both men and women. It is primarily written for physiotherapists dealing with incontinence and pelvic floor disorders, but is a useful reference for all health professionals.


This fully referenced book by a Queensland based physiotherapist covers pelvic floor topics for all life stages, including pregnancy, childbirth, activity, gym and sport, menopause, pelvic pain, prolapse and pelvic surgery. It is suitable for clinicians and their clients.

This book examines the underlying theory of the function, dysfunction and management of the pelvic floor. Integral theory is an interrelated and dynamic anatomical framework for understanding pelvic floor function and dysfunction, which emphasises the role of the connective tissue of the vagina and supporting ligaments in both function and dysfunction.


Designed to simplify the understanding and treatment of common bladder problems, this book contains a section on pelvic floor muscle strength and exercises.


This book provides a detailed summary of the clinical assessment and management of pelvic floor disorders. Beginning with theories on the anatomy and possible causes of pelvic floor damage, the text describes the importance of evaluation before determining the type of treatment required.


This book is written for physiotherapists and has topics on women’s health care in physiotherapy, anatomical considerations, maternal physiology, postpartum care, special pregnancies (including high risk and women with chronic illness and disabilities), evaluation and treatment of pelvic floor dysfunction, and the aging female’s needs.
Education Resources


This resource kit includes a booklet, flipchart, manual with PowerPoint slides and a CD-ROM. The kit has been jointly developed by the CFA and the Australian Physiotherapy Association. The aim is to assist health professionals to educate the community about pelvic floor muscles and their role in bladder and bowel health. Order from the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66 or through www.continence.org.au

Continence Foundation (New Zealand). (2008). *Understanding your pelvic floor*

This DVD provides information for women, and discusses good bladder habits, types of incontinence, healthy bowel habits, pelvic floor in sexual function. Order through jan@continence.org.nz

Home and Community Care (HACC)/Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) Continence Project. (2010). *Pelvic floor muscle exercise instruction and best toileting position for optimal bowel function DVD*

This DVD shows a specialist physiotherapist demonstrating positioning for pelvic floor muscle exercises with two older people. It also includes a section showing the best toilet position for bowel function. Running time: 25 minutes. Order through contpro@health.qld.gov.au
Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (2009). Pelvic Floor Exercises for Men DVD

This DVD, presented by Associate Professor Pauline Chiarelli, provides insight into the location and structure of pelvic floor muscles, and demonstrates how to exercise them effectively. It aims to help men understand their pelvic floor muscles and to improve continence pre and post prostate cancer treatment. Included in the DVD is a visually explicit demonstration on how the penis and scrotum appear when the pelvic floor muscles are being exercised correctly. Order through www.prostate.org.au


Professionally designed by a women’s health physiotherapist, midwife and personal trainer, this comprehensive DVD comprises two parts; an evidence based, peer reviewed education component that provides information on the pelvic floor, abdominals, posture and back care (42 minutes) and an exercise section (52 minutes). Exercises using a fit-ball specifically target both core and pelvic muscle strength, and include pilates, tai chi and yoga principles. While originally designed for post-pregnancy, the low-impact beginner, intermediate and advanced home based exercise program messages may be appropriate for women of all ages. Order through www.filifit.com
Journal Articles

This journal article list, while not comprehensive, provides health professionals with a number of pertinent articles from peer-reviewed journals about pelvic floor muscle function and exercises. Readers are encouraged to source additional literature on this topic as required.

Assessment of Pelvic Floor Muscle Function


Thompson, J., O'Sullivan, P., Briffa, K., & Court, S. (2004). Transabdominal and transperineal ultrasound: a study of reliability and validity. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the joint ICS/IUGA meeting. To access this paper, go to www.icsoffice.org, click on 'meetings and courses', 'ICS Annual Meetings' then 'ICS/IUGA 2004 (Paris)' then 'search'. Enter the surname of the first author in the box next to 'abstract search' and select the desired article.


**Effects of Pelvic Floor Muscle Training: Trials**


Effects of Pelvic Floor Muscle Training: Theory and Physiological Studies


Interaction among Pelvic Floor Muscles, Abdominal Muscles and the Diaphragm


**Pelvic Floor Disorders: Background**


**Pelvic Floor Function in Back and Pelvic Pain**


**Pelvic Floor Function in Sexual Dysfunction**


**Pelvic Floor Muscles and Erectile Dysfunction**


**Pelvic Floor Muscle Dysfunction in Incontinence and Prolapse (including Levator Avulsion)**


Thompson, J., O’Sullivan, P., Briffa, K., et al. (2004). Motor control strategies involved in pelvic floor elevation and depression: Poster presented at Proceedings of the Joint ICS/IUGA meeting. To access this paper, go to www.icsoffice.org, click on ‘meetings and courses’, ‘ICS Annual Meetings’ then ‘ICS/IUGA 2004 (Paris)’ then ‘search’. Enter the surname of the first author in the box next to ‘abstract search’ and select the desired article.


Pelvic Floor Muscles in Association with Other Muscle Contraction and Functional Activities


The Normal Pelvic Floor: MRI Studies


