

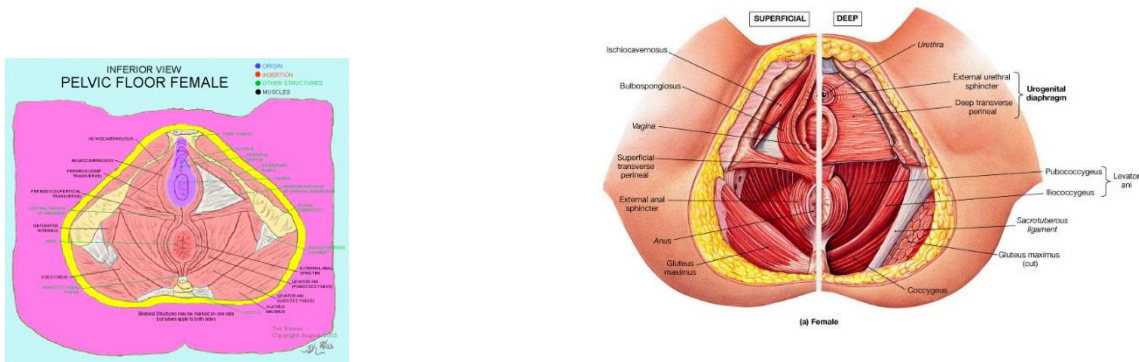
Pelvic Floor Awareness

Understanding the muscles of the pelvic floor

It may be helpful to visualize your pelvic floor as a hammock that supports all your lower organs. The flexibility and strength of this hammock come from a set of muscles and ligaments interwoven into the bowl-like *pelvic walls*, closing in at the base to form the *pelvic* and *urogenital diaphragms*. Entirely encasing the pelvic floor is a thin wall of *fascia*, or connective tissue, that covers, connects, and further supports the muscles and organs of the pelvic region.

The perineal body (or **central tendon of perineum**) is a pyramidal fibromuscular mass in the middle line of the perineum at the junction between the urogenital triangle and the anal triangle. It is found in both males and females. The perineal body is essential for the integrity of the pelvic floor.

Mapping the Pelvic Floor with Images:



Locating the Pelvic Floor muscles:

1. Feeling the pelvic floor muscles under pressure

In a sitting position, blow strongly into a balloon or mime the same action. You will feel a region in the lower pelvis that comes into play as you blow. This is the pelvic floor region.

2. Feeling and testing 3 different responses when you blew into the balloon:

- Urge to urinate
- Pelvic floor being pushed downward
- The region was being contracted in on itself and even moving upward.

3. Notice your pelvic floor in daily activities, for example when:

- You cough
- Raise your voice
- Laugh
- Block your breath before exerting yourself, as if lifting a heavy object
- Blow out a candle flame.

In all these situations the pelvic floor muscles are put under pressure. Now you can see that these muscles can be recognized and trained not only by practicing a series of exercises, but also by doing ordinary movements during ordinary days.

Locating the abdominal muscles in relation to the pelvic floor

1. Feeling the abdominal muscles contract and the pelvic floor relax

- “SSSSSS” sound, breathing out.

Do you feel your abdominal muscles gradually contracting as you exhale? Do you feel how the abdominal volume diminishes around the waistline? DO you feel how this progressively puts pressure on the pelvic floor, pushing it downward?

- Do the same thing with the “FFFFFFF” sound. Your exhalation should be faster and stronger. Then do the “HHHHHH” sound, it should be more forceful. Finally cough while doing the exercise. You should find that it is quicker and stronger. Repeat the sequence a few times until you can really *feel* the following sequence of:

Abdominal contraction → tightening around the middle → pressure on the pelvic floor.

Repeat these exercises mindfully, with curiosity. Take your time. When you feel you already have an experience of your pelvic floor in relation to the abdominal muscles, I suggest that you look for ways to minimize the pressure in the perineum.....in next sessions you will learn exercises to synchronize abdominal muscles with the pelvic floor.

Enjoy!

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References:

The Female Pelvis, Anatomy and Exercises by Blandine Calais-Germain