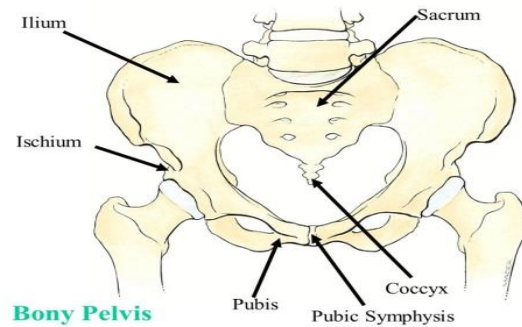


PELVIC PAIN IN PREGNANCY

This leaflet is for pregnant ladies with pelvic/groin or hip pain.

Why am I getting pelvic pain?



The pelvis is made up of 3 bones, connecting the base of the spine to your legs. The pelvic bones are connected to each other at a joint called the pubic symphysis, located in the centre underneath your belly button

These bones are tightly held together by ligaments. During pregnancy a hormone called relaxin is produced to soften the ligaments, allowing the pelvis to open for when your baby is born. This can cause increased rubbing of the pelvic bones which often causes your pains.

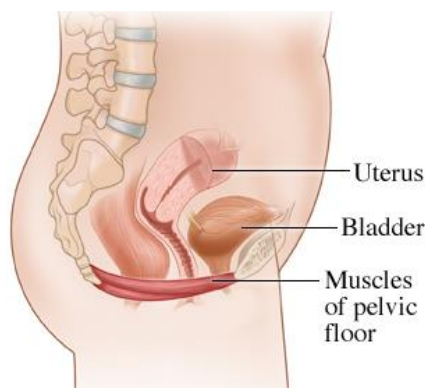
When the ligaments are too soft and elastic, the pelvis cannot effectively perform its job. The added pressure of the baby on your pelvis and hips can cause pain and discomfort when walking.

Occasionally the muscles around the hips and pelvis can become tight. This may compress the surrounding nerves, contributing to sciatic-like symptoms.

Pelvic floor exercises

The pelvic floor muscles surround the front and back passage. They help to control the bladder and bowel, stopping any incontinence.

Performing pelvic floor exercises regularly will help built the muscles that surround and stabilise your pelvis



How to strengthen the pelvic floor?

1. Sit or lie comfortable and relax the stomach and buttock.
2. Squeeze and lift the muscles around your front passage, vagina and back passage.
3. Imagine stopping the flow of urine or controlling wind.
4. Try performing some short strong squeezes.
5. Additionally, try holding the muscles for up to 10 seconds.

Aim to perform 5-10 squeezes depending on how strong your pelvic floor is.
Relax for 5 seconds in-between.
You will need to perform the whole routine 4-6 times daily.
To make the exercises harder increased the length of the hold and start to do the exercises in an upright position

How NOT to exercise the pelvic floor

DO NOT stop your urine flow mid-stream as part of an exercise
DO NOT hold your breath/ bear down and strain
DO NOT clench your buttocks

Getting in and out of bed

Many pregnant women complain of difficulty getting in and out of bed. Here is the best method to reduce your pains.

- Start diagonally in the bed
- Draw up your pelvic floor as you bend your knees one at a time.
- Ensure you have enough room to roll over
- Keeping your knees bent, roll over onto your side
- With your upper arm in front of you, push your body forwards and up as you lower your legs down over the bed.

When lying in bed, it is best to sleep on your side. Put a pillow between your leg, ensuring it supports your knees and ankles. This will prevent any twisting and stress on your hips whilst you sleep.

Wearing silky clothes to sleep in can often help reduce friction and ease movement when rolling in bed.

Sitting position

- Always ensure your back is supported against a chair.
- Roll up a hand towel and place it in the small of your lower back, providing support whilst you sit.
- Do not cross your legs.

Standing postures

- Stand with weight evenly through both legs
- If you have a stiff back – try performing some pelvic tilts

Walking

- Try not to twist at your torso
- A pelvic belt may provide support – ideally the belt should be worn around the widest part of your hips, across the pubic symphysis joint. The belts are designed to bind your hip bones together when walking. The belt shouldn't touch or support your bump

Stairs

- Reduce the amount of times you climb the stairs
- Plan in advance and bring your belongings up or down stairs to reduce unnecessary trips on the stairs

Getting in and out of the car/ in the bath

Place a plastic bag on the seat. This will allow you to easily swivel around without opening your legs.

Exercise class

- Swimming can be good to help reduce the pressure and strain on your joints.
- Try not to perform breast stroke legs.
- The Walsall Healthcare Trust runs a FREE ante-natal exercise class. The class provided gentle exercises and breathing techniques for pregnant women who experience pelvic and/or back pain.
- Ask your physiotherapist for more information on this class.

Housework/lifting

Try not to lift heavy objects as it can increase your pelvic pain

If you are required to be on your feet, you should aim to be active for 15 minutes before having a rest.

Sex

Try a different position which doesn't add stress on your pelvis. Lying on your side or kneeling on all fours may help with your pain.

Ice

If you experience burning pains, try placing a bag of frozen ice wrapped up in a towel onto the area for a maximum of 15 minutes.

Labour

Measure the distance between your knees that is pain free and write this in your hand help notes

If you have a queries contact your physiotherapist who will be happy to advice.

We treat:

- Lower back/groin/hip pain
- Separation of the tummy muscles
- Incontinence

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