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THE PELVIC BRACE

The pelvic brace is a combined pelvic floor and transverse abdominal low intensity muscle contraction. The transverse abdominal muscle is the deepest layer of the abdominal muscles and it aids in supporting the pelvic organs, spine and pelvis. Contraction of the transverse abdominal muscle creates a mild intensity tension of the lateral lower abdominal wall. Regular exercise of these muscles can build strength, awareness and retrain the muscles how to function together.

Correctly using and coordinating your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles can be the key to controlling your incontinence problem. The pelvic brace exercise creates an internal girdle to support your bladder and pelvic organs. First learn to perform the pelvic brace correctly, and then use the brace with physical activities that put excessive pressure on the pelvic organs and pelvic floor muscles.

POSTURAL MUSCLES

Many muscles in our body function all day long to keep us upright against gravity. We rarely notice that these muscles are even working as they perform at very low intensity. The transverse abdominal and pelvic floor muscles are included in this group of muscles along with muscles such as your back and neck muscles. When one of the muscles get weak it requires retraining to get it working again.

GUIDELINES TO PERFORMING THE PELVIC BRACE

The pelvic brace contraction creates a feeling of deep tension and drawing in of the lower abdomen and pelvic floor.

- Your spine (low back) should be in neutral position. Your therapist will help you find your neutral position.
- Always perform the exercise at 30% or less of maximum effort.
- The correct contraction creates a hollowing of the lower belly to the bikini line.
- Do not strain, bear down or bulge your abdomen as you do the exercise.

PERFORMING THE PELVIC BRACE

- Place your fingers on your lower abdomen just inside your pelvic bones. You should feel the low level contraction under your fingertips.
- Contract the pelvic floor creating tension in the surface layer muscles that moves up to your abdomen and stops at the bikini line. This draws in and flattens the lower and side muscles of your abdomen. Imagine drawing the vagina or scrotum into the body.
- Tighten both the muscles as if you are trying to zip up a pair of pants to the bikini line.
- Breathe while you maintain the low level contraction.
- Remember, do not bulge your belly, strain or allow movement in the pelvis or back.
- If you feel the quality of your exercise decline by starting to strain or bulge the abdominal muscles, stop your exercise session.