

Your pelvic floor muscles are a group of muscles that wrap around the underside of the bladder and rectum. In yogic terms it is the Root and the first two chakras reside here.

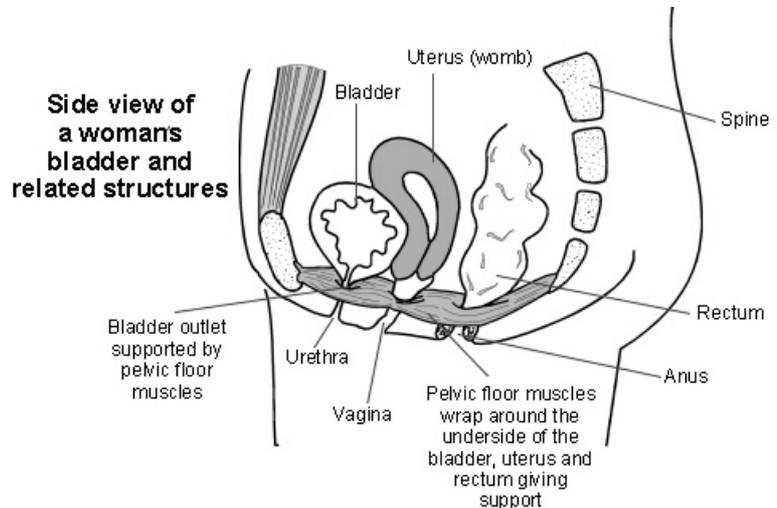
In essence, physiologically and philosophically this is the place of creation of who we are.

During pregnancy a great deal of extra weight and strain is put upon your pelvic floor area.

For many women this can weaken the muscles much that they can develop a bladder weakness

after birth which is referred to as 'stress incontinence'. It is a great deal more common than one may think. TV advertising and the enormous numbers of 'Tenalady' products that are sold in the UK give us a hint. Current information shows that 1 in 4 women will suffer with stress incontinence at sometime in their life.

But there is an easy and simple method to prevent this happening and the same method helps to repair damaged muscles too. So it's never too late!



50

### **This is how**

You need to do the exercises every day.

1. Sit, stand or lie with your knees slightly apart. Slowly tighten your pelvic floor muscles under the bladder as hard as you can. Hold to the count of five,..then relax. Repeat at least five times. These are called slow pull-ups.
2. Then do the same exercise quickly for a second or two. Repeat at least five times. These are called fast pull-ups.
3. Keep repeating the five slow pull-ups and the five fast pull-ups for five minutes.
4. Aim to do the above exercises for about five minutes at least three times a day, and preferably 6-10 times a day.
5. Ideally, do each five minute bout of exercise in different positions. That is, sometimes when sitting, sometimes when standing, and sometimes when lying down.
6. As the muscles become stronger, increase the length of time you hold each slow pull-up. You are doing well if you can hold each slow pull-up for a count of 10 (about 10 seconds).
7. Do not squeeze other muscles at the same time as you squeeze your pelvic floor muscles. For example, do not use any muscles in your back, thighs, or buttocks.
8. In addition to the times you set aside to do the exercises, try to get into the habit of doing exercises whilst going about everyday life. For example, when answering the phone, when washing up, etc.
9. After several weeks the muscles will start to feel stronger. You may find you can squeeze the pelvic floor muscles for much longer without the muscles feeling tired.
10. It takes time, effort and practice to become good at these exercises. It is advised that you do these exercises all the way through your pregnancy and for at least three months after the birth. You will notice the benefits after a few weeks. However, it often at least 8 weeks.

11. After birth you may feel very tender and bruised but this is a crucial time for your pelvic floor and it is important that you return to your routine of exercises. The exercises will also improve blood flow to the affected area and speed the repair and renewal.

Finally, during pregnancy you may feel as though the odds are against you – hormones, increased weight of your baby pressing on your bladder, tiredness. But if your muscles in this area are strong, toned and resilient, they will cope with the rigours and stretching of childbirth.