

How to exercise safely with your pelvic floor

When planning to exercise whether outside or in a gym there are key things to remember to keep your pelvic floor safe. Breathing throughout the exercise is important, whether doing cardio or resistance exercises. When you hold your breath it increases the downward pressure on your pelvic floor and that can weaken the muscles. Engage your pelvic floor and core muscles before and during resistance exercises, when lifting, lowering, pushing or pulling. Maintain good posture/body mechanics throughout exercising and regardless of what position you are in.

Avoid lifting too heavy, it can cause you to strain and/or hold your breath and can cause damage. Progress gradually through the exercises and watch for correct form to reduce risk of injury. Take breaks when fatigued or injured to prevent further injury or damage to your pelvic floor muscles. Listen to your body when exercising. If symptoms worsen with a specific exercise, modify it or stop and perform a different exercise for that body part/area.

Pelvic Floor Safe Exercise Examples:

Cardio	Resistance	Core
Walking	Seated exercises on chair	Single leg extension
Swimming	Dumbbell tricep extension	Modified plank on hands or knees
Seated cycling	Seated exercises on swiss ball	Wall push-ups
Cross trainer	Shallow/narrow leg squats	Ball bridges
Water aerobics	Prone leg curl	Arm and leg lifts on all fours
Low impact exercise classes	Shallow forward lunges	Leg lift sitting on the ball
	Dumbbell row	Standing balance work on the bosu of balance disc
	Pec deck	
	Supine bench press	
	Wall push-ups	
	Floor bridge	

Examples of Exercises to use caution (depending on condition):

*Please note patients considering these exercises with pelvic floor diagnoses should consult with one of our pelvic floor therapists before beginning these types of exercises

Cardio	Resistance	Core
Running	Jump squats	Sit-ups, curl ups, crunches
Jumping	Lifting/pressing heavy weights	V-sits
Boxing	Deep lunges/squats	Hundreds
High impact classes	Dead lifts	Double leg lowers
Tennis	High Bench step-up/down	Plank position on hands and feet (hovers, full push-ups)
Basketball	Chin ups/tricep dips	
	Any exercise where there is direct downward pressure on the pelvic floor	