



SSMHealth.

Sports Medicine & Rehabilitation



Benefits of pelvic floor exercises.

The pelvic floor consists of a group of muscles which cover the bottom of the pelvic cavity and assist in supporting the abdominal and pelvic organs. It includes several pairs of muscles that join in the midline. The pelvic floor encircles the bowel and bladder openings and in the female, the vagina.

Positive effects of regular pelvic floor exercise include the following:

Improves and helps maintain control of bladder and bowel function by:

- Increasing muscle volume (muscle actually gets thicker). The increase in muscle volume will increase the degree that the urethra closes against downward pressure. The more the urethra can close, the less likely urine will leak out.
- Increasing your ability to consciously contract the pelvic floor muscles when necessary functionally (i.e., coughing, sneezing, laughing, or lifting).
- Improving overall health of the pelvic floor muscles by increasing blood flow and circulation.

Improves support for abdominal and pelvic organs:

Imagine your internal organs as boats on a lake. There are two structures responsible to prevent the boat from sinking. The first structure is a ligament, which binds the organ to the bony pelvis, like a rope tied to a dock. The second structure is the pelvic floor muscles, which form a supportive sling underneath the organs, like water underneath a boat. Without both support structures, the organs would sink (prolapse). Strengthening the pelvic floor muscles is like making sure you are floating your boat on water, and it takes pressure off of the ligaments.

Improves sexual sensation and response by:

- Increasing awareness and sensation to entire area.
- Increasing strength of the orgasmic muscle.
- Actually changing the shape of the vagina by decreasing the severity of prolapse.

If you'd like to learn more about how our women's health program can help, please contact SSM Health Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation at **573-761-9178**.

Available at the **Hartsfield YMCA**.

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