

Your Life & Health After Delivery INCONTINENCE

By osteopath Caroline Penn DO MSc MSCC

Pregnancy, birth & caring for a young infant take a toll on Mum's body. It's hard to find time to devote to getting yourself back into shape, but when you do take the time and find it uncomfortable, painful or just simply are not getting results from exercises there is a reason.

I have often seen women who are trying to do a certain sequence of post-partum exercises and, because of a hidden problem, the exercises are inappropriate, ineffective or need modification. Bodies come in all shapes and sizes – we are not all the same. Whilst a particular exercise may be good for most women after pregnancy it may not be the right exercise for you.

INCONTINENCE is a common problem and pelvic floor exercises are usually advised. The most common mistake I come across is that of trying to squeeze too hard. This will often cause a drawing in of the stomach muscles which can switch off the pelvic floor muscles – so the answer is BE GENTLE.

Try the following:

Imagine are on the motorway and you know it's 30 minutes to the next Service Station. You need to hold back the flow for 30 minutes – you know you can't hold on tight, but you can sustain a gentle squeeze. The squeeze will work best if you GENTLY BREATHE OUT while GENTLY SQUEEZING, then RELAX COMPLETELY as you BREATHE IN and LET GO.

If you can't feel much happening try squeezing your bottom first. The anal opening is at the back of the pelvic floor and once this is working you can bring the squeeze forward to the vaginal opening by pulling up slightly in the lower tummy – just above the pubic bone.

If the exercises are not working for you it may be because the sacrum or coccyx have not returned to the normal position after the postural changes of pregnancy. Episiotomy scars or a tear during labour can also prevent progress. Gentle osteopathic examination and treatment can identify these problems and work with you to restore normal function.

About The Penn Clinic

With over 30 years' experience, The Penn Clinic gives you a range of treatments in safe, gentle hands. Our treatments are suitable for the whole family: Osteopathy, Pilates, Massage, Homeopathy, Counselling, Allergy treatment (NAET) and Autogenics. Our therapists work as a team with the osteopaths to provide a holistic approach to your problems. Full details are on our website www.pennclinic.co.uk

For information or to book an appointment, please contact us on: **01707 274 148**

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