

Pelvic floor rehabilitation: why might it be necessary?

The pelvic floor is made up of the muscles, ligaments and tissues of the pelvis. It plays a dual role by **supporting the genital and digestive organs and controlling their function**.

The **pelvic floor muscles may slacken** for various reasons, in both men and women. This may result in varying degrees of urinary or fecal **incontinence** or, in the most severe cases, **pelvic organ prolapse**.

Beyond age or intense physical activity, pregnancy and childbirth are among the most frequent factors that weaken the pelvic floor in women. During these periods, the pelvic floor muscles can be stretched or torn since they are put under considerable strain, first by the physiological changes that come with pregnancy, and then by the act of giving birth itself^f.

In general, these **reversible changes** have no long-term effects and your body will recover naturally. However, a **postnatal check-up** (six to eight weeks after giving birth)² will be recommended to verify your overall state of health. During this check-up, **pelvic floor rehabilitation therapy** might be prescribed to you. These sessions are performed by a midwife or a specialized physical therapist and are fully reimbursed. You will first be asked to describe any symptoms that have affected your everyday life since giving birth, such as incontinence or sexual dysfunction. This might make certain women uncomfortable. However, it is very important to inform your doctor honestly, in order to receive the post-partum care that is most suited to your needs. Following a manual examination of your pelvic floor, exercises to strengthen these muscles will be explained and prescribed¹ to you. These exercises are also designed to help you identify the various pelvic floor muscles and teach you how to contract and release them.

¹ http://docnum.univ-lorraine.fr/public/SCDMED_MESF_2010_VIVENOT_CLAIRE.pdf

² https://www.has-sante.fr/portail/upload/docs/application/pdf/synthese_post_partum.pdf