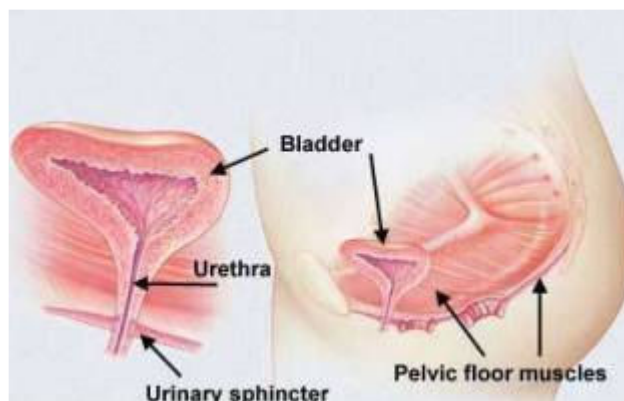




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April 2009

Incontinence and the pelvic floor



Do you fit the picture?

- Too scared to exercise in case of accidental leakage
 - Watch sport instead of joining in
- Wake up frequently in the night to use the toilet
 - Know every toilet in town
- Would rather stay at home than socialize

One out of every three women who have ever had a baby will experience some incontinence!

Why?

During pregnancy the growing baby puts enormous pressure and strain on the pelvic floor muscles. This causes overstretching and subsequent weakness of the musculature and can lead to incontinence. This is further exacerbated by the natural birth process.

What age groups are susceptible?

All women appear to be susceptible at any age. Stress incontinence is fairly common in young women (including teenagers) particularly those involved with high athletic or gym activity. With women of child bearing age, the number of pregnancies increases the chance of becoming incontinent. Woman undergoing menopause during this period may notice they are becoming incontinent. Estrogen is responsible for keeping the urethra and the lining of the bladder healthy. It also stimulates blood flow to the pelvic region, increasing strength in the pelvic muscles. As oestrogen levels drop during menopause, the pelvic muscles weaken further.

What is urinary incontinence?

Any unwanted or involuntary leakage of urine, *no matter how small*.

The two most common types of incontinence are:

1. stress incontinence - leakage with activities such as coughing, laughing, sneezing or playing sport/ participating in exercise
2. urge incontinence - leakage occurring when you urgently need to go but don't get there in time.

Urge incontinence often occurs with urinary frequency, a need to pass urine very frequently during the day or night. Someone with frequency knows every toilet around!

What is normal?

It is normal to:

- Go to the toilet around 4 to 6 times per day, and no more than once overnight.
- Pass more than a cupful each time
- Get to the toilet without having to rush
- Have no trouble starting the flow of urine and have a strong stream
- Have no need to strain to pass urine

Helpful tips on preventing incontinence

Firstly, keep your pelvic floor muscles strong especially during and after pregnancy, around menopause and if you are having gynaecological, abdominal or spinal surgery.

Keep within your healthy weight range.

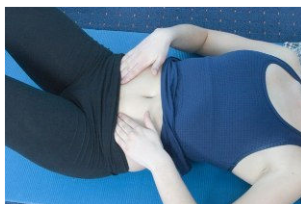
Don't do anything that strains the pelvic floor muscles: avoid repetitive heavy lifting and don't get constipated.... fibre, fluids and general exercise help this.

If you have back problems, keep your pelvic floor strong as well as your abdominals....your physiotherapist will help you with this.

If you have respiratory problems and have prescribed prevention medication, use it! Stop that cough!

Check with your GP if any medication you are on may contribute to your incontinence.

What is the best way to do a pelvic floor squeeze/lift?



A pelvic floor squeeze should squeeze up, and lift hard and fast. You should hold each squeeze up to 6 seconds. These squeeze/lifts/holds should be done without a rest time between. As your pelvic muscles improve, you may be able to hold for longer or do more squeezes.

For more information on our **Clinical Pilates Classes**, [click here](#).

Treating incontinence at PHYSIO4ALL?



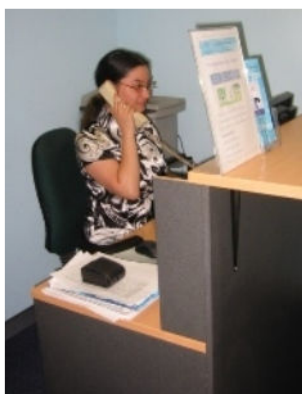
Dani graduated from the University of Witwatersrand in

Johannesburg, South Africa. Her strong interest and appreciation of human anatomy and physiology resulted in her receiving the Philip Tobias award for the top student in Anatomy. After completing her studies, she gained experience in a wide range of musculoskeletal, neurological and cardiopulmonary conditions working at one of the largest public hospitals in the Southern hemisphere, as well as in private practise. Dani also has a special interest in continence rehabilitation and Women's Health.

Dani enjoys keeping fit by running, spinning and playing netball, and thus appreciates people's desires to keep active and healthy. It is therefore her passion to help her clients achieve their goals in sport, work, or daily life.

Treatment of incontinence will always involve strengthening the pelvic floor muscles and improving their endurance and coordination. In addition, you may be taught bladder retraining techniques to help your bladder hold on better.

Making an appointment



To ensure patient privacy and comfort all Women's Health consultations with Dani will take place at the [Miller Street Medical Practice at 221 Miller Street, North Sydney.](#)

[Call to make an appointment on 02 9922 – 2212, or book online NOW!!!](#)

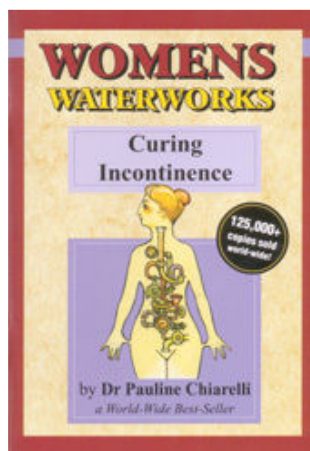
Days: Wednesdays from 2:00pm

Initial consultations are one hour- this includes a detailed examination of the pelvic floor, analysis of bladder function through bladder charting and exercise prescription.

Follow up consultations thereafter are half an hour. Patients should be seen on a weekly basis for a minimum of 6 - 10 weeks.

This Month's Women's Health Special!

Receive a **free copy of "Womens Waterworks"** to the value of \$15 with your initial consultation! "Womens Waterworks" is the best selling book on incontinence and pelvic floor exercises.



Seek help! Some useful links

- National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.
- <http://www.continence.org.au/>



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