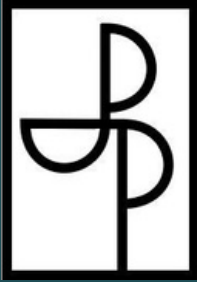


SAY NO TO KEGELS

why kegels aren't the answer to your pelvic floor (pf) problems



WHY YOU THOUGHT KEGEL

The Kegel was first discovered in 1948 by Arnold Henry Kegel (yes, a man chose to name the contraction of the pelvic floor muscles after himself). Back then, that is all we knew about the pelvic floor and thus, pelvic floor health was all about kegels. Fortunately we have since learned a lot more about the pelvic floor BUT most people have not updated their knowledge so the messaging to "just do kegels" is still very much out there.

WHY YOUR PF IS TIGHT

There are countless reasons why most (if not all) pelvic floors are tight. Specific to perinatal bodies, the pelvic floor is tight because: pregnancy posture positionally shortens the pelvic floor, the pelvic floor is overworking to support the weight of a growing baby above it in utero, babies come through the pelvic floor in a vaginal delivery which is trauma to the tissues resulting in gripping, there is often injury to the pelvic floor and associated pain that the pelvic floor will tighten to protect and stress breathing tightens the pelvic floor.



HOW A TIGHT PF IS WEAK

A tight, or already contracted, muscle cannot contract any further making it a very weak muscle. Consider the biceps muscle for an example. In order for the biceps to have access to a full contraction, it must be lengthened (elbow straight). If your elbow was held bent all the time (tight biceps), the only contraction you have access to is a very small and weak one. This is why people with a tight pelvic floor will experience incontinence, prolapse and pelvic pain. This is also why doing kegels will not get you anywhere. It is literally a waste of time.

SAY YES TO RELAXATION

how to relax your pelvic floor to gain strength and normal function



BREATH

Breath can be extremely effective in relaxing the pelvic floor especially since we have access to it as a tool all the time. The pelvic floor naturally relaxes and lengthens on the inhale (breath in) so you want to focus on taking a big breath in and direct it down into your pelvic bowl. You can use your hands on your lower abdomen or perineum for feedback. You can also visualize breathing down into your sitz bones or down to your tailbone. It is easiest to practice lying down on your back.

EXTERNAL

Massaging the pelvic floor muscles can help facilitate relaxation and lengthening. You can access some of the pelvic floor externally by sitting on a foam roll (broad release, less aggressive) or a tennis ball (specific release, more intense). You want the pressure to be on the tissue inside of your sitz bones. You can work your way from the front (pubic bone) to the back (tailbone) and side to side. Focus on breathing down into the tissue you are releasing to facilitate even further relaxation. Discomfort indicates tightness.



INTERNAL

Internal pelvic floor massage is by far the most direct and effective way to get a pelvic floor to let go. A combination of fingers and pelvic wands are used to access all layers of the pelvic floor. For further instruction and guidance, see a pelvic floor physical therapist or join one of my virtual programs at <https://jennyputtpt.com>

