



Beth Israel Deaconess  
Medical Center



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL  
TEACHING HOSPITAL

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[bidmc.org/pelvicfloorpt](http://bidmc.org/pelvicfloorpt)



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## Outpatient Rehabilitation Services

# ALL ABOUT YOUR Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy

[bidmc.org/pelvicfloorpt](http://bidmc.org/pelvicfloorpt)

Dear Patient,

**We're so glad you made this important step to improve your quality of life. Much too often people unnecessarily suffer from pelvic floor dysfunction in silence and don't know where to turn.**

Physical therapy can provide patients with great relief or even resolution. We are a highly-skilled and collaborative team committed to working with you and providing compassionate and comprehensive care. Our expertise in pelvic floor physical therapy will assist in relieving your symptoms and improving your quality of life. At the same time, you are an active partner in your care, and we look forward to working together.

Please carefully read through the following pages, as well as any additional information we've provided about your specific condition. If you have any questions at all, please call us at **617-754-9100**.

Best wishes for your continued health,  
The Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy Team

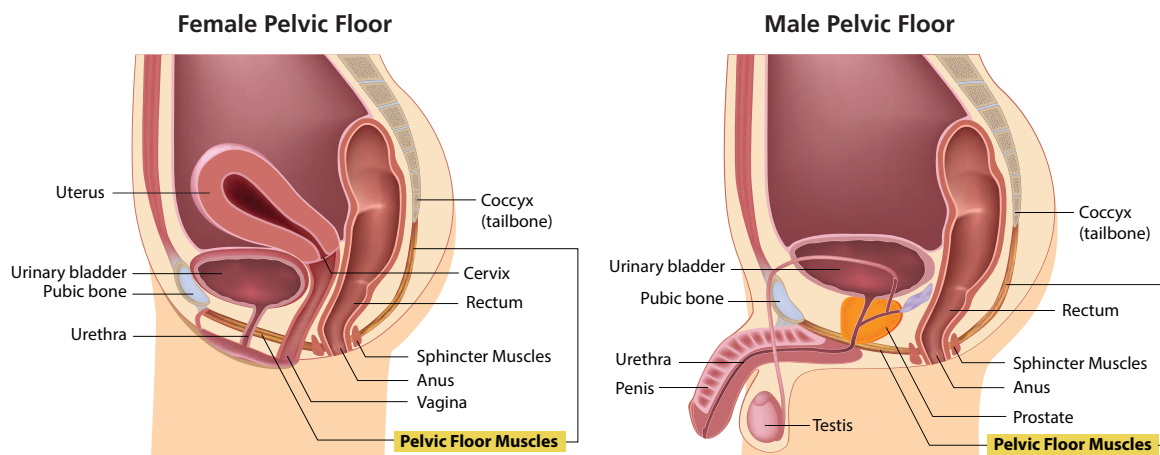


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# What is the Pelvic Floor?

The pelvic floor is made up of muscles and other tissues that form a “supportive sling” or “hammock” from the pubic bone to the tailbone (coccyx). These muscles assist in holding your bladder, uterus (women), prostate (men), and rectum in place. The contractions and relaxation of the muscles also help you control your urine flow, bowel movements, and sexual functioning. Problems with these muscles may result in urinary or bowel incontinence and/or pelvic pain.



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## What is Pelvic Floor Dysfunction?

Pelvic floor dysfunction is a term used to describe a problem with the muscles that support the pelvic floor. Tight or weak pelvic floor muscles may result in symptoms such as changes in urinary or bowel frequency, urinary or fecal incontinence, or pain. Pelvic floor dysfunction affects both women and men.

Some patients experience more than one symptom at the same time. Our team works together to coordinate care and evaluate, treat and communicate complex pelvic floor disorders.

## Common Types of Pelvic Floor Dysfunction

We treat patients for:

- Urinary incontinence
- Constipation and fecal incontinence
- Overactive or painful bladder syndrome
- Pelvic pain
- Pelvic organ prolapse

*No matter what you are suffering from, it is very important that you carefully read the additional specific information your specialist provided to you during your appointment. This information can be found in the front pocket, and further explains your condition as well as your personalized treatment plan.*

## What Causes Pelvic Floor Dysfunction?

There are many factors that may contribute to the condition, including traumatic injuries to the pelvic area (such as an accident), obesity, heaving lifting, repeated straining (such as during a bowel movement or with a chronic cough), surgery, radiation, and genetics. In women, pregnancy-related changes in the body, straining during childbirth, damage to the pelvic floor during childbirth, as well as decreased estrogen levels during menopause can also lead to a weakening of the pelvic floor muscles.

## What is Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy?

Pelvic floor physical therapy is a type of therapy that focuses on the muscles of the pelvic floor. Our physical therapists are musculoskeletal experts trained specifically in the evaluation and treatment of the pelvic floor muscles. We use a combination of “hands-on” therapy to teach patients how to properly use their pelvic floor muscles. Pelvic floor physical therapy can provide highly effective treatment and relief of pelvic floor dysfunction symptoms.



## Your First Visit

During your first visit, you and your physical therapist will discuss your health history, concerns and current symptoms related to the pelvic floor. An internal exam may be conducted to further assess your pelvic floor muscles and help determine what is causing the symptoms.

After the thorough evaluation, you and your physical therapist will develop a personalized treatment plan that will include a detailed explanation and demonstration of exercises to do at home. Your physical therapist may recommend additional specialists, and will communicate with other members of your medical team and help coordinate care. This visit may take approximately an hour.

# Treatment Options

There are many diverse treatment options available to patients. Depending on your diagnosis, more than one treatment option may be recommended. Please carefully read the information provided to you at your appointment with your physical therapist.

Treatment options may include:

- Pelvic floor muscle training
- Abdominal and core strengthening
- Postural awareness and education on body mechanics with daily activities
- Bladder training
- Dietary modifications
- Heat and cold therapy
- External and internal soft tissue mobilization
- Biofeedback
- Electrical stimulation



## Follow-up Treatment/Care

Your physical therapist will give you exercises to do at home. Make sure you follow the at-home treatment recommended, and if you have any questions, please call **617-754-9100**.

*This material was developed in 2016 by clinicians from Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. © Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, 5/16. All rights reserved.*