



THE PELVIC BRACE

Correctly using and coordinating your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles can be the key to controlling your incontinence problem. Many people strain, bulge their belly, hold their breath or bear down during activities that cause leakage. This puts excessive pressure on the bladder and pelvic floor muscles. Correctly using and coordinating the abdominal muscles with the pelvic floor muscles is a technique called the pelvic brace. Together these muscles create an internal girdle to support your bladder and pelvic organs.

USING THE ABDOMINAL WALL MUSCLES

To exercise the lower abdominal muscle (transverse) draw in your belly muscles as if you were trying to zip up a pair of pants that are too tight. This brings your belly button towards your spine (backbone) without moving or tilting your pelvis. Most people find it easier to tighten the lower abdominal muscles while they are exhaling or blowing out.

HOW TO DO THE PELVIC BRACE LYING DOWN

- Begin lying down with your knees bent and take a diaphragmatic (belly) breath.
- As you breathe out, tighten and pull your pelvic floor muscles up and in and continue holding them while you tighten the lower abdominals, bringing your belly button towards your backbone.
- Hold the brace without straining for ____seconds. Repeat ____ times.

HOW TO DO THE PELVIC BRACE SITTING OR STANDING

- Begin sitting with your feet supported or standing with good posture and a neutral spine with your fingertips on the sides of your lower abdomen as directed by your therapist.
- Take a diaphragmatic (belly) breath.
- As you breathe out, tighten and pull your pelvic floor muscles up and in. Continue holding them while you tighten the lower abdominals, bringing your belly button towards your backbone.
- Hold the brace without straining for ____seconds. Repeat ____ times.

BRACING WITH BREATHING AND QUICK CONTRACTIONS

- Begin in a sitting position.
- Simultaneously lift and tighten the pelvic floor muscles while you blow out (exhale), then tighten the lower abdominal muscles. Imagine first that your pelvic floor and then the belly muscles are moving the air out of your lungs with the contraction.
- One exercise lasts 1-2 seconds, blow out quickly while tightening pelvic, then abdominal muscles. Repeat ____times.