

FREE 5 DAY DEFEAT THE LEAK CHALLENGE

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Welcome!

My Defeat the Leak 5 Day Challenge is a taste of my 12 Week Pelvic Powerhouse Programme for the postpartum woman wanting a step by step, solid strategy for smashing pelvic floor leaks and taking control of their pelvic health. It's also for any woman wanting a shock-factor free future pelvic health journey through all life stages.

Evidence based, effective and financially viable strategies for immediate & long term management of leaks with sneezing, coughing, laughing and lifting is HERE. I'm excited to share this with you freely so you can experience for yourself, the power of consistent, dynamic pelvic floor training and lifestyle to manage incontinence



I'm Genevieve, a Physiotherapist specialising in Pelvic Health on a mission to empower folks with the knowledge, skills and tools to take charge of their pelvic floor health and get dry while continuing the exercise they love.

Why all typical pelvic floor advice for postpartum leaking women stops at kegels & 'don't's', I will never know....Don't lift heavy. Don't do core exercises. Don't run. Just do 10,000 pelvic floor squeezes every day...forever!

Here's a radical thought: what if you cancelled 'don't' and stopped focusing on ONE muscle group to enhance your future pelvic health and instead used exercise to reclaim your life? I dug into the science to bring you a results-focused and personalised pelvic health and lifestyle solution to significantly reduce your urinary leaks and ultimately improve your quality of life.

Pelvic floor muscle training is only ONE piece, to the leaking puzzle. Incontinence can be complex but the perfect combination of tissue loading & consistent support could be all that's standing between you and gaining control over your leaks right now.

Let's get started!

HAVE YOU LEAKED YOUR NOT-SO-SECRET SECRET TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST YET?

Nope? I had a hunch 🤔 LESS THAN 10% OF YOU HAVE! If you're:

- Tired of wearing a tampon, 2 pads and leakproof underwear to get through every (insert activity OR your favourite exercise here);
- Avoiding certain activity for fear of others seeing your swamp crotch or making leaks worse;
- Restricting fluids and
- Weeing multiple times before any outing to make sure you're completely empty...but still leak!

YOU. ARE. NOT. ALONE.

Let's check that this guide is right for you. When do you leak?

- 1. Never – urine does not leak
- 2. Before you can get to the toilet
- 3. When you cough or sneeze
- 4. When you are asleep
- 5. When you are physically active/exercising
- 6. When you have finished urinating and are dressed
- 7. For no obvious reason
- 8. All the time

If you ticked box 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 & 8, this guide is for you.

If you also have a grade 1 or 2 bladder, uterus or bowel prolapse (or don't know the grade and feel heaviness, dragging or a dull aching in your perineum at various times of the month) this guide will also be useful!

WHAT 2 GOALS DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE AFTER THE NEXT 5 DAYS?

WHAT ARE 2 ACTIVITIES YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO DO LEAK-FREE IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS?



WHAT CAUSES LEAKS WITH SNEEZING AND EXERCISE?

Leaking of all kinds is the most frustrating and embarrassing symptom of pelvic floor dysfunction that can be improved OR CURED with lifestyle changes and pelvic HEALTH training (no, not just random kegels or pelvic floor squeezing)

You can leak with a strong pelvic floor and a weak one! So where should you start when it comes to STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE? The Pelvic Floor can be a large component of why you leak with high stress on the bladder. However, more important than strength, is the TIMING and COORDINATION of the urethral sphincters (part of the Pelvic Floor). This is where pelvic floor training can be helpful, especially if you leak during a cough, sneeze or with exercise. Not only do these sphincters have to fire at the right time, speed and strength, they also react to pressure changes within your abdomen during every daily activity. For example, picking up a pen off the floor vs lifting a 40kg barbell require different recruitment & input from the pelvic muscles as well as the lower and upper body muscles.

There are a few ways to reduce stress urinary incontinence. I'm sharing my 5-step process with you here to get you started on the road to recovery.

Let's do a pre-assessment to determine how much your leaking is currently affecting you.

PRE-ASSESSMENT. Think about your last 4 weeks:

How often do you leak urine? (Circle one)

- Never 0
- About once a week or less often 1
- Two or three times a week 2
- About once a day 3
- Several times a day 4
- All the time 5

How much urine do you think you leak?

- None 0
- Small amount 2
- Moderate amount 4
- Large amount 6

How much does leaking interfere with your everyday life? (Circle a number) 0 (not at all), 10 (a great deal)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Score (add all circled numbers together):

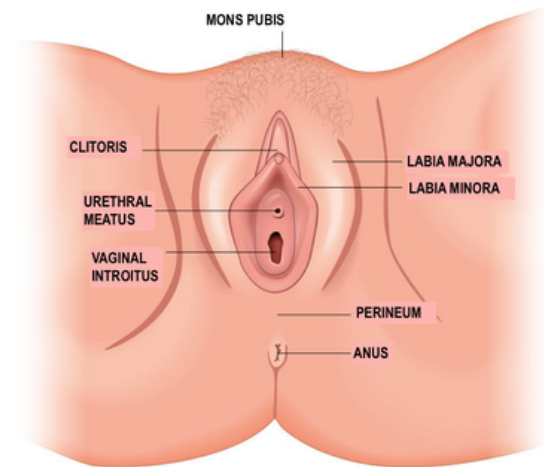
DAY 1

FIND YOUR PELVIC FLOOR

While many factors contribute to sudden leaks, training the pelvic floor can significantly improve your symptoms in as little as a few weeks but ideally 3 months. The pelvic floor must do 2 things: squeeze & relax at the right times during the day, exactly like any other muscle. The pelvic floor is a small, thin group of muscles that support your pelvic organs & lower back; control emptying of your bladder and bowels & respond to intra-abdominal pressure changes. Your own finger is the ultimate pelvic floor self-check tool. This is the most accurate way to receive feedback on what your brain communicates as a 'contraction' and a 'letting go' or 'relaxation'.

In a pelvis that has/had a uterus, there are 3 separate tubes that open through the pelvic floor:

- **Urethra/urethral meatus/wee tube** - where wee exits the bladder
- **Vaginal introitus/vaginal entrance** - where menstrual blood exits, speculum's/penis' enter and where babies can exit
- **Anus** - back passage where bowel movements occur.

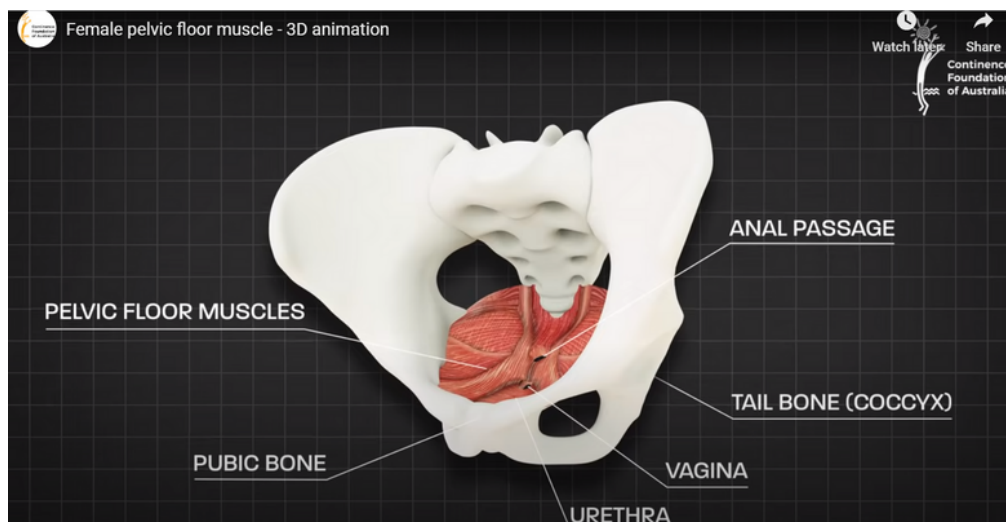
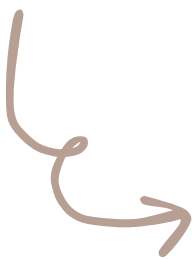


Can you feel a squeeze and let go?

YES

NO

Check out this 3D animation for a detailed visual of the actual pelvic floor muscles behind the vulva:



Day 2

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Truthbomb - breathing is a core exercise. Your pelvic floor is part of your core. Your urethral sphincters need to generate enough pressure to overcome large pressure changes coming down from above it (intra-abdominally). This is what keeps you continent.

Resetting the natural synchronised action of the diaphragm with the pelvic floor allows you to control the effect that pressure has on your symptoms during different activities. Playing around with different breathing techniques & postures can ultimately be the difference between a leak-free squat or a wet one.

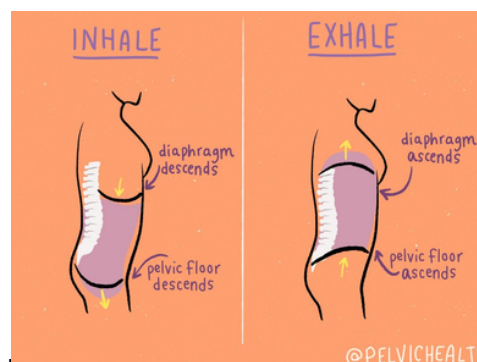
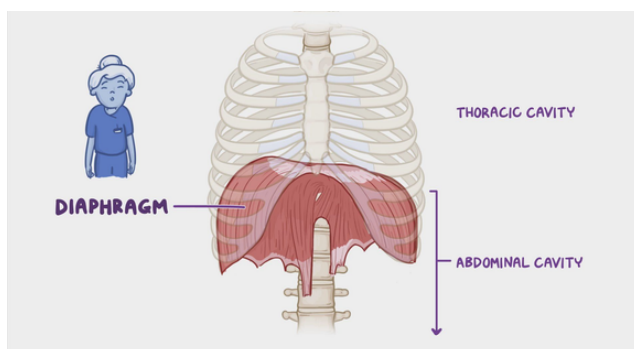
Learning to diaphragmatically breathe is the first step to beating the leak.

Your pelvic floor has a threshold. When it comes to faster, heavier, more unexpected & repetitive activities, the nervous system which controls your muscles, has to react. THIS is what you are training.

Optimising breathing strategies during an activity can help not only your pelvic floor RELAX & CONTRACT at the right times but also control your abdominal pressure .

A **BREATH IN** should allow your diaphragm to flatten and pelvic floor to move down or stretch

A **BREATH OUT** should allow your diaphragm to dome back up and your pelvic floor to lift to its natural starting position.



See the next page for step-by-step instructions so you can start practising

STEP 1

Start in sitting with one hand over your lower belly and the other hand over your pelvic floor between your pants and the chair. Try to lean slightly forward so you're not slumped back onto your tailbone.

STEP 2

Take 3 breaths in and out. Do you notice what moves? On the inhale feel the air travel all the way down into your stomach so you feel your **belly move out against your hand**, your **ribs move out to the sides**, your **lower back push out** and your **pelvic floor sink down** into the chair i.e stretch, which is a good thing!



STEP 3

On the next inhale, draw the air in through your nose **with a bit of force** but still stretch it out to a count of 5 seconds.

On a 5 second exhale, blow out forcefully (as if lifting something heavy) but without puffing up your cheeks. Keep your lips pursed, as if you're blowing bubbles out through a straw. Your LOWER belly should draw in and up and your pelvic floor will naturally move away from your hand (up towards your head).

STEP 4

If you have a pelvic floor that is hard to relax, move into a glute stretch, deep wall squat or a happy baby pose + practice breathing through a strong stretch. This will prepare you for Day 3.

If you know your pelvic floor can completely relax, progress to standing. If you have a theraband or long towel handy, place it around your back at the level of your ribs, cross over at the front and pull each end so it feels like you are gently squeezing your ribs.

BREATHE IN, let your hands slide back together as your ribs expand. On the BREATH OUT, notice the band recoil and your hands separate again. Don't add any squeezing...just yet!

Repeat 10 times to see if you can get all the air down to both hands.

DAY 3

MASTER THE PELVIC FLOOR ACTION

The pelvic floor is THE FLOOR of your pelvis. Imagine it as the floor of an elevator that moves up and down. So...don't go squeezing your glutes, your thighs, your abs or your toes during a contraction.



Start position:

The aim is to work the front of your pelvic floor more than the back. Kneeling on your hands and knees can be a good starting position (or in a stretch as per Day 2) to bias the front of your pelvic floor. If you can't feel anything, sitting on an inflatable ball or rolled towel front to back between your 'sit bones' helps you feel lifting off and letting go.



Connect the breath:

With a hand over your pelvic floor, do 5 breaths to warm up (see day 2).



Lift:

On the last breath OUT, when your pelvic floor is already on its way up, add a squeeze. Imagine holding in gas at your back passage, picking up a blueberry at the entrance of your vagina & holding the flow of wee. Imagine placing the blueberry back down as you relax and breathe out.

AN EXAMPLE PELVIC FLOOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

COMPLETE DAILY, 3x/DAY

Strength+endurance (about 60% of your strongest squeeze):

2-3sets of 8reps, up to 10sec holds followed by

Power+speed (maximum 100% contraction):

2-3sets up to 5reps, squeeze+hold 2secs, relax 2 secs in between reps

You should not feel pain doing this programme, if you do or notice you are unable to squeeze, your pelvic floor may need some DOWNTRAINING first.

TEST YOURSELF!

While emptying your bladder on the toilet, try to COMPLETELY STOP the flow of wee during the STRONGEST part of your stream (midstream) in the FASTEST time possible.

Note how long your wee stream is first then use a stopwatch/phone to time how long it took to stop the stream. Let go of your pelvic floor + finish emptying.

Record here: _____

DAY 4

SQUEEZE, SNEEZE, RELEASE

Now you know WHAT and WHERE your pelvic floor is as well as HOW to use it, let's put your squeeze action to the test to see how fast and coordinated it is.

A tried and tested method, 'The Knack', is a strong, well-timed 'kegel' or pelvic floor contraction used during any increases in abdominal or downward pressure onto the bladder. It aims to train the pelvic floor to switch on just before you do the movement that makes you leak, hold for the duration of the activity, then switch off once completed.

You can imagine that the stronger and more coordinated the pelvic floor is, the faster you'll contract and longer you can hold.

Today you will practice with pretend coughing.

Read over day 3 pelvic floor action to refresh your memory, then:

1. Forcefully cough a few times - did you leak a little?

2. Repeat. This time, before you cough, lift and hold a strong pelvic floor contraction, then forcefully cough a few times. Hold this contraction throughout, then relax. What did you feel this time?

3. If you still leaked, that's ok! A cough and sneeze are reflex actions so the more you practice, the more you train your nervous system to switch your pelvic floor on more efficiently (and eventually automatically) during these times. If you didn't leak - excellent, day 5 may be quite a natural step for you.

One way to practice this action without waiting for a random sneeze, is to think about those steps during a movement that you can prepare for. You want your pelvic floor to get used to switching on ideally on a breath out, holding during the action, then letting go afterwards.

Think of this as **BLOW BEFORE YOU GO** when...

- Lifting your toddler
- Squatting holding weight
- Moving from sitting to standing



Day 5

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Hello day 5! Let's find out if breathing using your diaphragm and coordinating contractions improves leaking DURING common leaking activities.

The exercise example we'll use today is a squat jump. Squatting then jumping off the floor and landing again.

- > Start standing in front of a box, feet hip width apart and even weightbearing on the sole of your foot - think heels, big toe & fifth toe
- > Take a deep **BREATH IN** (as in Day 2) to relax your pelvic floor.
- > Bend forward from your hips and bend your knees to touch the box behind you. This should be a HIP HINGE movement
- > **BREATHE OUT FORCEFULLY** at the bottom of your squat and squeeze your pelvic floor. This doesn't have to be a maximum squeeze but try this too!
- > Hold the contraction as you jump and push off the ground using your legs, continuing to hold as you land again
- > After landing, relax the pelvic floor

If you DIDN'T leak, trial a few reps to see when you notice leaking.

If you DID leak, which part of the squat jump did that happen? Can you play around with WHEN you time your pelvic floor squeeze?

ALTERATIONS:

- Land **SOFTLY** so your ankles, calves and larger leg muscles absorb the load before your pelvic floor
- Ensure knees are directed slightly outward to your pinky toes on jump and land
- Contracting your pelvic floor just before a land rather than at the take off (depending on when you leak)
- Slow the pace
- With more repetitions, if you feel the urge to leak, refocus breath or remember which rep this was and take a small break before finishing your set

Running (and more repetitive activity such as continuous double under skipping), won't allow you to THINK about when to switch on + off your pelvic floor. This is where looking at the body movement as a whole is important. This is where single leg strength & gradual progression of strength training is useful and takes time.

Just like returning to running post ACL surgery, breaking down ANY ACTIVITY into manageable chunks gives tissues time to tolerate load & progress!



CONGRATULATIONS!

You've completed my 5 day Beat the Leak Challenge!

Now, to check results

QUICK POST-ASSESSMENT.

**Compared to when you started this challenge, how are your symptoms now?
(Circle one)**

- **Very much better**
- **Much better**
- **A little better**
- **No change**
- **A little worse**
- **Much worse**
- **Very much worse**

HOW DID YOU GO?

If your symptoms got better, yay! That was fast! You've identified one way to start tackling your leaks. I would love for you to continue training for another 2-3 weeks and THEN complete the pre-assessment questions to gauge a more significant result.

The next step to resolving urine leaks for the longer term, is a systematic guided challenge to adopt your unique combination of treatment strategies, as yours will be different to the next person. I would highly encourage you to discover these with the guidance of a pelvic health physiotherapist rather than alone.

LEAKS NOT TOTALLY IMPROVED?

If your score didn't change much from the start of the week, or the activity you leak with feels a little more complex, don't worry, this is only a snippet of the steps in my unique Incontinence Recovery Roadmap. Read over on the next page to learn if we are the right fit for working together to manage your incontinence.



WANNA LEARN MORE?

Pelvic Floor Training is only ONE piece to the leaking puzzle.

To see if we can work together to find a path that works for your unique situation, click on the button below to apply for a free 15min call or book in for a telehealth consult for an individualised assessment

SCHEDULE A FREE CALL

1 HR TELEHEALTH CONSULT