

Pregnancy Related Pelvic Girdle Pain

(aka Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction)

Pelvic pain affects up to 60% of pregnant women.

With 20% of that group seeking medical attention. The good news is that 95% of women come out the other side pain free.

How do you know you have pelvic pain?

Pelvic pain is diagnosed by where you feel the pain and what brings it on. Pain can be felt in the middle of one/both buttocks or in the pubic bone at the front. Women will describe it like a sharp stabbing pain in the bum or as if they have been kicked right in the centre of the pubic bone.

What are the classic signs of pelvic pain?

The classic signs that you are suffering from pelvic pain are if you feel pain when doing any of the following activities:

- Turning in bed
- Going from sitting to standing
- Getting out of a car
- Pushing heavy objects, like a shopping trolley or a Hoover
- Going upstairs
- Standing on one leg, like when you put on underwear
- Walking

Who gets pelvic pain?

Any pregnant woman can get pelvic pain. Why some women get it more severely than others is unclear, but the earlier the onset of symptoms, the more important it is to manage it well. Risk factors include being hypermobile (i.e. bendy joints), a history of an injury to the area or a mild imbalance in your anatomy.

What can you do?

Too much loading and movement of the pelvis is what annoys it. So, try the following:

- Avoid pushing heavy trolleys/buggies/hooovers
- Avoid carrying toddlers hitched on one hip
- Avoid doing too much on your good days
- Avoid wearing high heels
- Do have self-compassion for yourself; not everyone will understand your pain
- Do use the support belts. Common support belts recommended are "Serola" and "Fit Splint"
- Do the exercise routine overleaf
- Do sit with hips higher than knees; you can use a wedge cushion to achieve this
- Do partner and self-massage techniques
- Do use heat, particularly standing in a hot shower, focusing the water where you are sore
- Do attend physiotherapy with a professional who specialises in women's health



To walk or not to walk?

Walking requires a lot of stability in your pelvis. If your pelvic pain is worse after walking you have to limit your walking.

If I can't walk, What can I do?

A cross-trainer or elliptical is a great alternative to walking. This works because you never shift your weight all the way over to one side of your pelvis. Swimming also allows supported body movement, be sure to give yourself lots of time to get undressed and dressed. You may have read that you shouldn't do breaststroke but when your body weight is fully supported by the water, the movement of opening your legs is not the same as on land. Do whatever stroke feels right for you.

**Self-compassion
is key! Slow
down and put
yourself first!**

What do we advise?

Our goal for women with pelvic pain is to manage it well so they can get through the main parts of life such as personal care, work, housework and childcare. Moderate to severe pelvic pain is unlikely to resolve until baby arrives although there will be good days. The most important thing is self-compassion! Pelvic pain can be very sore and very debilitating if it gets severe. Our biggest challenge in the classes is to get women to slow down and acknowledge that they need to put themselves first and ask for help.

This also means saying no to many things.

These exercises have been tried and tested in the classes. The muscles around the pelvis are working hard, the aim is to relieve the tension with stretches and mobility exercises.

Glute Stretch

This is a light stretch. Lying on back with knees bent, place the ankle of the leg to be stretched on the other knee and let the foot fall to the ground. Receive a stretch in the bum of the crossed leg.



Hip Flexor

Lunge position with a ball or at a wall. Forward leg, the foot is in front of the knee. Tuck your pelvis under, and squeeze the bum of the behind leg as you gently press your hips forward. Keep shoulders over hips and ribs in.



One Leg Circle

The aim of this exercise is to mobilise the hip joint in a supported way separate from the pelvis. Place a band/yoga strap around the foot, holding it with one hand and the opposite arm comes out wide to help balance. Slowly lower the leg out, down and around in a circle. Use the band to pull the leg back and only do as big a circle as you feel you can control.



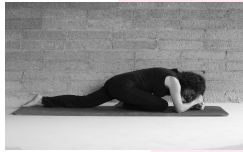
Sleeping Positions

Sleeping position is very important with pelvic pain. You need to support the legs more to minimise loading or shearing on the pelvic joints. Always aim to have the hip, knee and ankle in the same plane as much as possible. Doubling over a single duvet is a good way to get more height.



Deep Glute Stretch

This is a deeper glute stretch. Start in hands and knees position, bring one foot forward and place the ankle of this foot in front of the other knee. Straighten the leg back as far as possible. Keep hips pointing downwards. Receive the stretch in the bum of the bent leg.



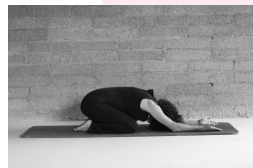
Hip Twist

Lying down, legs are bent with hips and knees and ankles in the same line. Let one leg float out to the side on the inhale and draw it back on the exhale. Do this exercise slowly.



Rock Backs

Start in hands and knees position with knees wider than hips to allow room for the bump. Move your hips back towards your feet and then forwards towards your hands. Rocking slowly, backwards and forwards.



Tests for severity of pelvic pain

Lying flat on your bed attempt to lift one leg. If you cannot do this at all or with extreme effort, you need to see a physiotherapist.

'Ask you Bump Room Instructor to demonstrate some movement tips to help'