

# Core Connection Breathing

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped muscle at the base of your ribcage that plays an important role in breathing. The diaphragm connects with the abdominals and pelvic floor muscles (PFM) to provide your trunk with optimal support and function. When you inhale your diaphragm contracts down to pull air into the lungs, this disperses pressure down into your abdominal cavity right down to the pelvic floor at the bottom. When your PFM work optimally they relax and lengthen slightly in response to this pressure and naturally recoil back up to their natural position when you exhale. Because of these natural mechanics and relationship between the diaphragm, core and pelvic floor we can use breathing to help with retraining PFM.

## Inhale to relax & lengthen PFM

- Lie down on your back with one hand on the side of your ribs and the other on your lower belly
- Breathe in through your nose noticing your abdominal cavity filling with air in a 360 degree pattern like a balloon, inflating not only the front but your lower ribs, back and right down to your pelvic floor.
- Breathe out through your mouth

*Effective breathing is so important for good results*



**REPEAT FOR 10 BREATHS EACH DAY**

## Exhale & contract your PFM

- Breathe in as you have already been practicing
- As you exhale try to contract your PFM by drawing them in and sucking up from the bottom like you are holding in a tampon.
- Visualisations can be helpful to get the activation correct such as imagining an elevator door closing and going up a level or sucking a blueberry up through a straw
- **Lastly it is important to relax and lengthen your PFM again between each activation**



**REPEAT FOR 10 BREATHS, 3 TIMES A DAY**

### Inhalation

Diaphragm shortens and lowers to expand lungs

Diaphragm

Abdominal wall expands as pressure increases with inhalation

Abdominal wall muscles

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Pelvic floor muscles

Pelvic floor descends (relaxes) as intraabdominal pressure increases

### Exhalation

Diaphragm relaxes as air moves out of lungs

Diaphragm

Abdominal wall contracts

Transversus abdominis

Pelvic floor muscles

Pelvic floor contracts

When you feel confident with doing these exercises lying down, try them in different positions; side lying, kneeling on your hands and knees, sitting and standing.

Pelvic floor retraining and rehabilitation is not just isolated to 'pelvic floor exercises' these steps are just the beginning, learning to integrate them into full body exercises and your daily movements will be your next steps.

Getting these foundations right is key to your success, practise them consistently.

I highly recommend an assessment from a Pelvic floor physio if your pelvic floor is not functioning as it should. Pelvic floor dysfunction is common but not normal