

## CONTACT DETAILS

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Physiotherapy New Zealand acknowledges the Continence and Women's Health Special Interest Group for assisting with information in this leaflet.

This leaflet does not replace the benefits of a full assessment and programme provided by an expert physio.



**PHYSIOTHERAPY** NEW ZEALAND  
*Kōmiri Aotearoa*



## PELVIC FLOOR PROBLEM? PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP...

- Treat or prevent urinary and bowel leakage
- Manage and resolve pelvic pain, prolapse, or pain during sex
- Strengthen your pelvic floor during and after pregnancy



**PHYSIOTHERAPY** NEW ZEALAND | MOVEMENT FOR LIFE  
*Kōmiri Aotearoa*

"I needed help after the birth of my second child with a prolapse. I couldn't have got the same understanding and results by reading about it and doing the exercises on my own. I needed to talk about it." (Anonymous)

"I'm a million times better. I can cook dinner. I can run and catch my toddler when she's about to run onto the road - without wetting myself!" (Anonymous)

"I sleep all night, go to the toilet half the amount of time and no longer panic looking for toilets." (Anonymous)



Pelvic floor problems are more common than you might imagine.

Most people are amazed to hear that over 1.1 million New Zealanders are affected by incontinence or that one in three women who have had a baby will experience urinary leakage.

Common symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction include:

- Difficulty controlling wind or bowel motions
- Leakage with coughing, sneezing, laughing or exercising (even a small amount)
- Rushing to the toilet for fear of leaking or leaking before you can get there
- A bulging, heaviness or dragging feeling inside the vagina (often worse with exercise)
- Decreased vaginal sensation and sexual arousal
- Erectile dysfunction and leakage after urinating – in men
- Pain in your pelvic, groin or buttock area.

Unfortunately too many people suffer these symptoms alone. If you think you may have a problem with your pelvic floor then please seek help. Pelvic floor physiotherapy is a very safe and effective treatment option – so there's no need to suffer in silence.



### How can physiotherapy help?

A pelvic floor physio can help you regain control of your bladder and bowel by designing a programme that's just right for you.

Your physio can help with:

- Prevention and management of incontinence and/or prolapse
- Teaching you to locate and effectively strengthen your pelvic floor muscles
- Urge management strategies
- Learning the correct toileting techniques for both bladder and bowel
- Bladder retraining
- Resolving pelvic pain or pain during sex
- Coughing, sneezing and bracing techniques
- Explaining how your bladder and bowel should work
- Retraining over-active pelvic floor muscles that may be causing you pain.

### During and after pregnancy

A strong pelvic floor is particularly important during and after pregnancy as baby can put additional strain on these muscles. A physio can help you manage these changes by providing assessment and appropriate treatment.

Your physio can help with:

- Exercises for good bladder control (women who are pregnant or have given birth are more likely to experience urinary leakage)
- Exercises to retain and regain muscle tone and shape
- Advice on posture and back care
- Assessment and treatment of problems associated with joints and muscles, such as back and/or pelvic girdle pain.

### Will it work?

Physiotherapy is internationally recognised as the first choice of treatment for incontinence and prolapse.

Your physio will use evidence-based techniques that are more cost-effective and less invasive than other options such as surgery. Research shows that physiotherapy is highly effective at improving and resolving these conditions.

Many people don't know that physiotherapy-led pelvic floor training has a cure rate of up to 80% for stress incontinence. And it has no adverse side-effects. Surely this is much better than wearing a pad for the rest of your life?

### How do I find a physio?

Go to [www.physiotherapy.org.nz](http://www.physiotherapy.org.nz) and click on 'Find a Physio' to see who's available in your area. A pelvic floor physio has specific expertise in this area of rehabilitation and treatment.

Check that your physio is a member of Physiotherapy New Zealand. This shows they're committed to high standards of professional practice. And remember that you don't need a GP referral to see a physiotherapist.

For specific continence information the New Zealand Continence Association offers a free helpline:

**0800 650 659.**

