

# THE PELVIC FLOOR

## Why not to ignore the pelvic floor

The pelvic floor of people with vaginas is an increasingly commonly discussed topic. The high incidence of urinary incontinence in people with vaginas and the increasing awareness of sex problems such as vulvodynia and vaginismus is helping people affected by these problems feel more confident and empowered to seek help. However, there is still plenty more to be done for raising awareness of these issues and, at the same time, the pelvic floor of people with penises must not be ignored.

Despite the relationship between sexual function, pelvic floor function and pelvic pain in people with vaginas being a complex one, there is some evidence to suggest a close relationship between the pelvic floor and sexual problems in people with penises. Pelvic floor dysfunction has been associated with problems including erectile, ejaculation and orgasm dysfunction and chronic pelvic pain.

Pelvic floor muscle training has been shown to increase penile rigidity and penile hardness in some people with erectile dysfunction. Pelvic floor muscle re-education, including 'downtraining', has been shown to result in reduced resting muscle tone and reducing pain. Pelvic health physiotherapy may help to improve these problems and should be considered as part of a multidisciplinary approach.

*Reference: Cohen, D., Gonzalez, J. And Goldstein, I. (2016) The Role of Pelvic Floor Muscles in Male Sexual Dysfunction and Pelvic Pain. Sexual Medicine Review 4 (1); 53-62.*