



Comprehensive Physical Therapy Center Newsletter

Coming Soon

Physical therapy is proven effective for spinal stenosis.

PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE TRAINING REDUCES INCONTINENCE IN WOMEN

As people age, urinary incontinence becomes more common. The problem is most prevalent in women, especially as they age. In fact, anywhere from 10 to 40 percent of women experience urinary incontinence—the most common types being stress and urge urinary incontinence. Women with incontinence are commonly treated with relatively conservative interventions, such as physical therapy, changes in lifestyle, behavioral training, anti-incontinence devices, and medications. Some women also undergo surgery. However, the use of pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT) has recently gained popularity as an effective and non-invasive treatment. Because of this growing interest, a review was conducted to determine whether or not it was more effective than inactive control treatments, like placebo and sham.

The review looked at 13 trials involving 714 women, of which 13 reviews and 403 women were used as part of the data analysis. Each of the trials used involved the use of PFMT. For purposes of the review, PFMT was defined as a "defined programme of repeated voluntary pelvic floor muscle contractions taught and supervised by a health care professional."

The outcomes researchers were interested in were:

- + Cure or improvement in symptoms as reported by the women.
- + Improved quality of life in relation to the symptoms.
- + Number of leakages experienced.
- + Number of micturitions.
- + Pelvic floor muscle function.
- + Cost effectiveness.
- + Adherence to treatment.
- + Adverse effects.

Two of the trials reported that women who used PFMT were far more likely to indicate their incontinence was cured—17 times more likely, to be exact. Four more trials showed that 75 percent of patients using PFMT had perceived improvement.

- + Fewer women who used PFMT reported symptoms that interfered with their lives.
- + Women who used PFMT reported one less instance of leakage per 24-hour period in comparison to control groups.
- + Women using PFMT reported three fewer voids per day than control groups.

Overall, the results of this review indicate that PFMT is an effective treatment for women with urinary incontinence. Patients should work with a therapist with experience in training patients to use PFMT to strengthen support the pelvic organs and contribute to the sphincteric closure mechanism of the urethra.

Hay-Smith EJC, Dumoulin C. Pelvic floor muscle training versus no treatment, or inactive control treatments, for urinary incontinence in women (Review). The Cochrane Library 2006, Issue 3.

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