

Janessa Cowie BSc MSc PT CAFCI CMT

Janessa completed her master's degree at the University of Alberta. She is licensed to practice acupuncture and manipulations. She uses a variety of manual therapy treatment techniques, including myofascial release. Janessa also specializes in pelvic health physiotherapy. She took a special interest in pelvic health after having children and realizing the importance of accessing proper care and support for pelvic health throughout every stage of life. She has always been physically active and enjoys both a wide variety of sports and spending time with her family.

What is pelvic health physiotherapy?

Pelvic health physiotherapy is a specialized area of physiotherapy that looks at the health of your pelvic floor. This includes men and women who are active, whether or not you have had children. If you have had children, through vaginal delivery or cesarian section, you have stressed your pelvic floor. Pelvic physiotherapy allows you specifically assess and treat your pelvic floor, which effects your life. Don't suffer in silence.

If you are experiencing any of the following, you may benefit from pelvic health physiotherapy:

- urinary incontinence (leaking) - it may be common, but is not normal for your body
- pelvic pain, with or without low back and abdominal pain
- pelvic organ prolapse
- painful intercourse
- pain during and after pregnancy
- diastasis recti
- a need for core strengthening

Is it safe to see a pelvic health therapist while pregnant?

Yes

What to expect?

A confidential, private, thorough medical history and objective assessment of the pelvic floor. Your pelvic floor affects many part of your body and can either help or hinder different areas, such as your back and your hip. After the external exam, the therapist may complete an internal exam. This is thoroughly discussed in the appointment before an internal exam is consented to. Internal exams are performed while you are draped and lying on your back in a private setting. They allow the therapist to directly assess and treat the pelvic floor; these muscles need to find a balance between strength and mobility in order to support and function properly within your body.

Do I need a referral?

No. You can refer yourself. Some insurance plans may require a referral for reimbursement, but you need to check with your provider.

Why the questionnaires?

The questionnaires allow us to get a baseline of where you are at functionally and what stressors that may exist for your pelvic floor.

Filling these out before your appointment gives us a better idea of where to start and how to best progress with treatment. Please make time to complete them (as you feel comfortable) before your appointment so we can start when you come in.

Who should see a pelvic health physiotherapist?

Whether you have had children vaginally or by cesarian, you have stressed your pelvic floor. Your body has been through some amazing changes and your pelvic floor has had to endure increased loading and stress along with it.

Pelvic health physiotherapy is often sought by pregnant and postpartum women, but it may also be beneficial for :

- menopausal/ post menopausal women
- athletes (traditionally female) who run and/ or lift and experience symptoms with activity
- men who are post prostatectomy
- if you have any of the symptoms listed earlier

Why pelvic physiotherapy, if I already strengthen my core?

Traditionally the core has been thought to support and protect many movements related to our bodies. Strengthening your core is important. Doing it properly is essential. Like any group of muscles, your pelvic floor may need more than just strengthening, and a way to ensure that your technique is appropriate.