



Yoga Therapy and Pelvic Health

SYTAR 2019

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In order for the Pelvic Floor (PF) to fulfill its numerous roles, it must be able to:

- Relax
- Move through full its full excursion (ROM) in timing with respiratory diaphragm (expand, widen and descend on inhale; ascend into dome-like shaped position on exhale).
- Engage (voluntarily and involuntarily) in timing with its numerous synergistic muscles. The amount of force produced by the PFMs during its excursion will depend on the demands of the task (ie, the amount of PFM engagement/contraction required depends on the type of activity performed). Furthermore, the amount of engagement varies throughout the task/activity/movement (it is nuanced and not a simple 'on/off' contraction).
- PF health is not just about kegels; in some cases, kegels may exacerbate symptoms or the condition for a variety of populations.

The ability of the PF to relax, move through its excursion, and efficiently engage in functional ways depends on variety of biopsychosocial factors.

The biopsychosocial factors that can influence the ability of the PF to function and fulfill its many roles: trauma/tissue injury; alignment; biomechanics including respiratory mechanics and neuromotor timing; neuroendocrine system; nutrition; pain; mental/emotional status; state of nervous systems; relationship to self/others.

Yoga practices and philosophy can be applied to potentially influence any of the above factors: can use 8 limbs and pancha maya kosha model. This offers a biopsychosocial approach to pelvic rehabilitation and wellness care.

Practice Ideas:

- person must feel safe!
- enjoyable
- willing to do
- meaningful
- ease vs effort

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1) PF Awareness:

Tactile + visual feedback, visualization/mental imagery of Pelvic Diaphragmatic Breath (PDB):

Child's pose

Cat/cow modifications

Seated

Supine

Prone

Can vary/explore different:

- hip and pelvis positions
- breath cycle
- focal point of PF visualization (R, L, anterior, posterior PF)

[Toilet meditation = A.I.R.B.A.G.](#)

Awareness, Imagine, Relax, Breathe, Allow, Gratitude

2) PF Relaxation:

PDB (in coordination with PF awareness as above) in:

Child's

Garland

Supported/modified happy baby

Modified pigeon

Reclined Cobbler's (with self-GI massage)

Mantra, mudra, pranayama practices to promote relaxation (dependent on individual)

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3) Facilitation of PF engagement + excursion:

- Postures to engage hip synergists
- Cue breath to promote posterolateral costal expansion
- Movement timed with PF visualization
- Breath (vary focus and breath cycle for functionality)
- Movements may include hip IR/ER and pelvic ROM during variety of practices

Practices:

Supine

4 Point

Plank - Child's – plank – 'puppy dog'

Goddess Pose + variations

Warrior Flows

Other:

Heighten foot awareness

Standing balance practices

Vocalization/chants (PD/vocal diaphragm connection)

Resources:

Prosko, S. (2016). [*Optimizing Pelvic Floor Health Through Yoga Therapy*](#). International Association of Yoga Therapists. Yoga Therapy Today Winter Issue: pp. 32-34, 48.

Prosko, S. (2014). [*To Leak or Not to Leak. Urinary Incontinence*](#). Yoga for Healthy Aging.

Prosko, S. (2014). [*Treatment of Incontinence: The PhysioYoga Therapy Approach*](#). Yoga for Healthy Aging.

Prosko, S. (2018). [*Things to Know About Pelvic Floor Cueing in Yoga Classes*](#). PhysioYoga.

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Anderson B. Over-cueing the pelvic floor. Cue the Breath! [Pelvic Floor Follow Up – 2015 PMA](#). YouTube segment. Last accessed May 24, 2019.

Kaminoff L. [Bandhas in a Modern Practice: A Historical Perspective](#). YouTube segment. Last accessed May 24, 2019.

Hall C, Garden S. [Lost in Translation: Is Mulabandha Relevant for Modern Yogis?](#) Yoga International Online. Last accessed May 24, 2019.

Compilation of articles, YouTube videos, podcasts:

Prosko S. (2016). [Pelvic Floor Galore! Resources for Creating Pelvic Floor Health Through Yoga](#). PhysioYoga. Last accessed May 24, 2019:

<http://physioyoga.ca/pelvic-floor-galore-resources-for-creating-pelvic-floor-health-through-yoga>

Creating Pelvic Floor Health video practices on Vimeo:

PF awareness, relaxation, motor imagery, engagement, breathing practices for people with PF dysfunction and to enhance PF wellness:

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/pelvicfloorhealth>

PhysioYoga and the Pelvic Floor Online Course:

14 hour online course for yoga therapists and other healthcare providers interested in integrating yoga into pelvic rehabilitation and wellness care:

<https://embodiaacademy.com/courses/94-physioyoga-and-the-pelvic-floor-shelly-prosko>

Thanks for sharing your time today! May we stay curious, patient and humble as we learn, serve and grow.

In service,

Shelly

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