

Being active with bladder/bowel issues

Bladder and bowel problems can affect adults of all ages, but you shouldn't let them put you off being active.

Here's how you can get started.

- > **Everyone can benefit from regular pelvic floor exercises** to improve bladder and bowel control. Find free information guides on how to find your pelvic floor muscles and improve their strength on the POGP website, pogp.csp.org.uk
- > **If you leak during jumping or high-impact activities**, try to draw up and tighten your pelvic floor muscles before the increase in pressure – this will help the pelvic floor resist the downward movement of the bladder. This is easier if it is a short burst of movement, so if you plan to do continuous high-impact activities like running or riding, you may need advice from a specialist physiotherapist.
- > **The pelvic floor and your internal organs** are well supported on a bicycle. Treat yourself to an extra comfortable seat to reduce pressure on the tissues and bones. *Remember to activate your pelvic floor when you lift out of the saddle or have to push extra hard.*
- > **If you find star jumps difficult** – keep your feet together as you jump and just move your arms. It is easier to keep your pelvic floor muscles working when your legs are closer together.
- > **Crunch-style sit-ups can cause pressure** downward on the pelvic organs. Be careful to contract the pelvic floor for support before you lift your head and shoulders. *Go slowly, and focus on good technique.*
- > **You can reduce impact on the pelvic floor** by wearing good quality, cushioned and supportive shoes.
- > **Between pelvic floor squeezes**, make sure you relax the muscles underneath completely. In an exercise session avoid the temptation to 'grip' all the time. *Allow the muscles to join in more and then less depending on what you're doing.*
- > **Stretch the pelvic floor area after exercise** just as you do your legs and arms. Yoga poses like Butterfly and Child Pose are good relaxation postures.
- > **Many women feel more confident** when wearing an absorbent pad or similar while exercising. *Remember that in the long-term, bladder and bowel problems can be treated – so seek help from a specialist physiotherapist if you need it.*

For more ideas and advice, visit: www.csp.org.uk/activity