



PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM
MOVEMENT THEORY

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Part 2

Core and Pelvic Floor Pressure

Pressure

- Managing pressure becomes a primary goal during pregnancy and postpartum. Every person should have an understanding of pressure.
 - What pressure means
 - How it's generated
 - How to control it
- Common pressure-related problems include doming in a diastasis recti, pelvic organ prolapse, incontinence, pelvic floor tension, and hernias.



- Intra-abdominal pressure (IAP) decreases compressive lumbar disc forces by 31% and shear forces by 24%. (Liu et al., 2019)

What Creates the Pressure?

(Sembera et al., 2022)

- The abdominals and diaphragm are the primary muscular drivers behind pressure in the core and pelvic floor.



- They have an antagonistic respiratory function, but a dual role in postural stability and pressure generation.
- The diaphragm produces pressure by contracting down.
- The abs produce pressure by contracting in.
- As demand increases, the diaphragm and abdominals (along with the pelvic floor muscles, paraspinals, and deep intrinsic back muscles) will co-contract to help ramp up IAP.

Managing the Pressure

- Intra-abdominal pressure correlates with abdominal wall tension during clinical evaluation tests. (Novak et al., 2021)
 - Abdominal wall tension directly relates to intra-abdominal pressure generation.
 - Strong abs are good for the spine, but are they good for the core and pelvic floor? Yes, as long as the pelvic floor and front abdominals can keep up in strength.
- Pressure stimulates a muscular and fascial response. In the right dosage, it can help make someone very strong.
- The impact of acute and chronic strenuous exercise on pelvic floor muscle strength and support in nulliparous healthy women. (Middlekauff et al., 2016)
 - “CrossFit athletes did not have stronger pelvic floor muscles when compared to their non-strenuous exercising counterparts.”
 - “This suggests that specific pelvic floor muscle strengthening, rather than general muscle fitness, is needed to improve pelvic floor muscle strength.”
- Pressure, created by the upper abs, forces out urine and pelvic organs. It increases pelvic floor tension.

- Tension further increases incontinence and prolapse symptoms.
- Breathing plays a huge role in pressure regulation.
- This is why we need to have people work equally on breathing, diaphragm excursion, and rib cage mobility, and not only on core strengthening postpartum.

Pressure Check-In

- How do you know if someone is putting too much pressure down?
- Assess what’s happening at the lower abs to help determine if they are creating pressure down.
 - Can use with male or female clients for diastasis recti, pelvic floor dysfunction, and hernias

Upper and Lower Ab Balance

- If their breathing is perfect, they might just need a little bit of isolated lower ab strengthening to help balance out the pressure being generated from the upper abs.

References

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