

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A VISIT TO A WOMEN'S HEALTH P.T. AT DESERT PHYSICAL THERAPY

**Examination:** Each patient referred to Physical Therapy will receive a private and thorough examination of all aspects of their condition. Following a review of your medical history and primary complaint, we will perform a physical exam of posture, flexibility and strength. We will also palpate to determine areas of tenderness and muscle tension. For patients experiencing incontinence, we will review your daily diet and fluid intake as well as bladder and bowel habits. Patients with pelvic floor dysfunction, pelvic and/or vulvar pain and incontinence will often need an intravaginal exam to determine the strength and tone of the pelvic floor muscles. This will ONLY be done with your informed consent. The pelvic floor muscles are located internally (see picture below). Because they can't be seen, many women have difficulty determining if they are contracting or relaxing these muscles correctly. A simple intravaginal exam can determine the ability of the patient to effectively use these muscles. If you would prefer to have a witness in the room for your examination and/or treatment, please bring one with you or let us know prior to your first visit.

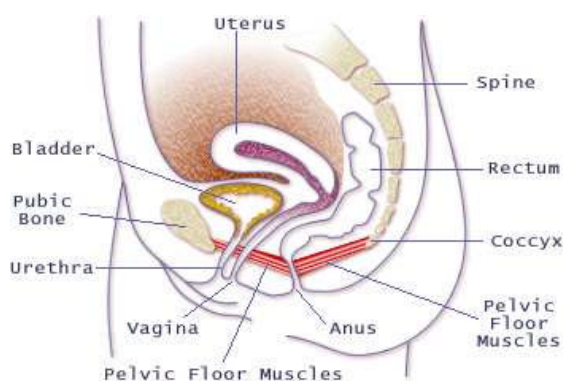
**Treatment:** Each treatment session will be tailored to your specific needs. Physical therapy interventions typically include manual therapy, such as soft tissue mobilization and trigger point release, therapeutic exercise, including stretching and strengthening activities, and patient education regarding posture, body mechanics, and information about your medical condition. Additionally, we can use a modality called biofeedback (detailed below) to assist in the treatment of both incontinence and pelvic floor dysfunction/pain. Every patient will be given a home activity program so they can continue to make progress between physical therapy sessions. All patients are encouraged to be active participants in their rehabilitation.

**Biofeedback:** Biofeedback is a non-invasive means of monitoring physiologic processes, such as muscle tension. By visually displaying the activity of specific muscles on our computer screen, you can learn to better control the muscles for improved relaxation and enhanced strength. Patients with incontinence frequently have weakness in their pelvic floor muscles, whereas pelvic pain conditions often involve tight and spasmed muscles. Either an internal vaginal sensor or surface electrodes (see pictures below) are placed over the key muscles to record muscular activity. While using biofeedback, we will lead you through an individualized program to focus on strengthening your pelvic floor muscles and/or relaxation techniques to decrease pelvic floor muscle tension/spasm.

**What to wear:** Loose, comfortable clothes and/or shorts.

Your comfort and privacy are very important to us. We will always respect your wishes with all examination and treatment techniques.

### Pictures:



Female side view to display Pelvic Floor Muscles

Internal Biofeedback Sensor

External Biofeedback Sensors