



## Body Awareness Physical Therapy

# The Body Beat

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### **Incontinence...** *more common than you think*

**I**t's not always the easiest topic to broach and often times people don't talk about incontinence. Incontinence is the involuntary loss of urine. It can affect men and women, though the frequency is much higher among women. Nearly 50% of women will experience incontinence in their lifetime; episodes tend to increase during pregnancy, after child-bearing, and during menopause. Men tend to experience incontinence from prostate enlargement or surgery, and from nerve injuries. Understanding what triggers incontinence and what can be done for it can help individuals ensure quality of life and avoid embarrassing social issues associated with incontinence.

The main types of incontinence are stress, urge, overflow and functional. Stress incontinence is associated with loss of urine with exertion, such as coughing, laughing, jumping, or lifting. It occurs when the pelvic floor muscles become weak. The pelvic floor muscles can become weak during pregnancy, childbearing, and frequently during menopause.

During menopause estrogen levels drop, muscle tone decreases, as does the strength of the pelvic floor muscles. Stress incontinence can develop because of poor muscle control of the "core muscle" groups and is sometimes associated with low back and sacroiliac strains and pain. Stress incontinence can be helped substantially and often eliminated with appropriate strengthening of the pelvic floor muscles and "core muscles".

Urge incontinence may be the result of an overactive bladder or muscles spasms. Symptoms are typically associated with urgency, such as putting the key in the door and "hardly making" it in to the bathroom. When urine loss starts, it may be hard to stop. Overactive bladder is often associated with bed wetting during childhood and will reappear during adulthood. Infections, food irritants, pelvic surgeries, medications, menopause, and back problems may also affect the degree of urge incontinence. Treatment may include medications for infections, and to control bladder contractions. Understanding how to relax, and maximally contract pelvic floor muscles is critical in

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managing urge incontinence.

Overflow incontinence may result from scar tissue or prolapsed organs that cause narrowing of the urethra (the canal through which urine leaves the body). The bladder is never allowed to empty, it becomes overly full and results in urine leakage. This condition requires additional testing from your physician to diagnose and treat.

Mixed incontinence occurs when stress, urge, and/or overflow incontinence symptoms are present. Functional incontinence is the result of one's inability to ambulate to the bathroom. Addressing the underlying functional limitation is necessary to treat functional incontinence.

Several types of incontinence can be treated and a highly trained physical therapist can help you improve the quality of your life.

# Q'N'A

Your questions answered by the Licensed Physical Therapists of Body Awareness Physical Therapy.

## **Q. How can Physical Therapy help my incontinence?**

**A.** Physical therapists trained to treat women's health issues including incontinence can evaluate pelvic floor muscles for weakness, spasms and endurance. It is also critical to evaluate the low back. Educating women how to do pelvic floor contractions (Kegal's) properly and strengthen core muscles are key elements of a successful continence program. Other treatments include biofeedback, electrical stimulation, manual therapy to address spine alignment and to release muscle spasms, and patient education to avoid other aggravating factors. Appropriate physical therapy treatments can often minimize or eliminate symptoms associated with stress and urge incontinence.

## **Q. Is incontinence "normal"?**

**A.** If you or someone you know is experiencing incontinence please know that

this is *not* a normal part of aging and should *not* continue after childbearing. At Body Awareness Physical Therapy we offer women's health physical therapy. Our highly trained staff uses state of the art equipment to evaluate and treat many types of incontinence and many other conditions specific to women. We offer private treatment rooms and establish individualized programs for each patient. Many women are shocked at how quickly physical therapy helps them regain the quality of life and control continence.

## **Q. What do I need to do to receive treatment?**

**A.** To be treated with physical therapy you should see your physician for a regular physical exam. He or she will order any necessary tests and can refer you to physical therapy. For further questions about physical therapy and taking the next step to regaining control in your life please call (949)366-3362 or email us at [BodyAwarenessPT@aol.com](mailto:BodyAwarenessPT@aol.com).

## **BODY AWARENESS GRADUATE OF THE MONTH**

### **Graduate of the Month: Carol Holinger**

Carol was seen in physical therapy for neck pain which radiated to her shoulder and arm. Symptoms affected her sleep, daily activities and prevented her from enjoying her active lifestyle which included golf.

Additionally, Carol experienced nagging pain around her ribs which



she can now manage on her own.

*Achieving 100% was a goal I hoped for and Body Awareness Physical Therapy helped me to do this! I would recommend this group to anyone who needed to get their life back.*

*Carol Holinger*

# Community Corner

Body Awareness Physical Therapy offers a comprehensive Women's Health Physical Therapy program in our San Clemente location and can treat or help manage many of the following conditions in our Costa Mesa location as well.

- Pelvic Floor Prolapse
- Dyssynergia—incoordination of muscles around the pelvic floor
- Constipation
- Pelvic Pain
- Dyspareunia—pain occurring with intercourse
- Endometriosis
- Dysmenorrhea—pain with menstruation
- Interstitial Cystitis—chronic inflammation of the bladder
- Low back pain during and following pregnancy

We offer private treatment rooms, a caring, sensitive environment and highly trained physical therapists to educate and treat you while providing for your comfort and privacy. Contact our offices to discuss treatment options, answer any questions or schedule a visit.

Have a question for our **Q'N'A** column or a suggestion on what you would like to see in the Body Awareness *Body Beat*?

Please contact us in Costa Mesa

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# Healthy Hints

## Healthy Bladder:

1. You can figure your recommended daily water intake by dividing your body weight in half (ie: a 150 lb person should drink at least 75 oz of water).
2. The normal number of times adults should urinate per day is 8.
3. Common bladder irritants include caffeine, chocolate, alcohol, smoking and spicy foods.



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