



Video Transcript

Learn To Notice & Feel The Pelvic Floor

Hi, my name is Melissa, and I want to talk to you about your pelvic floor. That can bring up a lot of mystery and even baggage, and I want you to know that whatever you think about or feel, when you hear that word, pelvic floor, or you share language around it, That's totally okay, and it's completely welcome here in your embodied experience of this part of your anatomy. First of all, as a human being, we all have pelvic floors. But what I want you to know, if you have a vagina, your pelvic floor is going to be exceedingly more important to you depending on your goals. if you are going to give birth. If you want to age really well with health and vitality, if you want to have a stellar sexual experience with yourself or with others, this part of you has to be worked like any other part of you. So it means we're going to get familiar in a way that is empowering and comforting. Sometimes when I bring up pelvic floor work, which you're going to hear of a lot, like you're hearing about it now more and more. I see it on social media, the health and well -being of your pelvic floor. But I want you to know exactly what we're talking about. I don't want it to be a mystery and I don't want it to have any taboo. I want you to own it completely. So knowing this part of your anatomy so deeply is also part of your empowerment and owning your physical experience as well as your mental and emotional embodiment of that experience. So let's talk about the pelvic floor. First of all, I want you to know that your pelvic floor is made of the same kind of skeletal muscle as your bicep. So that means If it's weak or you're worried about it, that's no problem because you can strengthen it just like your bicep muscle. Now, because of how internal, how deep it is in your body, it may be harder to access it first because you may not be familiar with it and

what it does. So this particular class is about getting you familiarized with that part of yourself in a very general way. Right now, as I'm sitting and I'm sitting on a yoga brick, I can feel with my breath into my pelvis.

So before we go into the internal aspect, let's just feel with our hands our pelvic bowls. You can see that my thumb is touching the front of my pelvis. This little bony aspect here that's connected to what we often describe as the wing. I just want you to feel and breathe into the breath of that, how wide this part of you is, how it's responsible for so much. This pelvic girdle, the bony parts of your pelvis are responsible for housing reproductive organs, some of your digestive organs, and helps your body move through space, particularly if you're by pedal. And if you don't walk like other people do or you don't have the same kind of gait or embodied experience, your pelvis is still responsible for how you embody being seated the way I am right now, how gravity is moving through me and how my bones distribute the weight of gravity through my body. So let's just take a moment to literally feel with our hands and to touch ourselves and to reclaim this part of ourselves as just normal. And aren't we so grateful to have this? Yeah. To take.

And right here, my fingers are settling on the bony protuberance of my pubic synthesis, the little piece of cartilage that brings the two halves of my pelvis together in the front. And that's a sensitive area. So be careful when touching it. Just don't bang yourself here.

Keep breathing, getting familiar with the bony landscape. This is the house. This is the exterior of your pelvic floor.

As I touch these hip crests here, I'm always so amazed at how high they go. And of course, this changes from person to person, right? Like your own anatomy is unique. Even though we all have generally this pelvis that I'm talking about in this bony structure, it's unique unto you. How high does it go? What is the breath of that wing? What is the wingspan of your pelvis? And if this is the first time you've ever become acquainted with this aspect of yourself, do touch and do conscious awareness, I highly recommend that you use Google and search for images of the pelvis and I even would say, you know, look at some anatomy books. I want you to know what's up. And I'm even traveling underneath to my sitting bones.

Yeah, those bony parts of yourself underneath your butt, that's part of your pelvis. They're going to be really important. I'm going to be referring to those a lot in other videos so that you know, oh, those are those landmarks that I can use. If I can't feel the muscle, I I can always feel the bone. The bone's more exterior to my body so I can play with that. I can touch it and connect. Great. Nice.

Welcome to your pelvis. What I want you to do now is sit in any position that feels most comfortable for you. And that can be in a chair, on a yoga brick, on the floor, whatever. And I simply want you to breathe and see if you can send your breaths far down into your body.

This is going to be a quickie. This is just a general touching base with this part of yourself. How far can the breast go?

I want you to relax your belly, relax the abdominal muscles. Don't hold. Don't be pulling in. That's not necessary or useful in this moment, okay?

Relax the belly. And if that is hard for you, because I hear this a lot, like I don't want to release. I'm working hard on toning my abs or I don't, I'm not comfortable with my belly, you know, kind of poaching out. That can be worked on also if that's your desire, but you don't want to be creating unnecessary intra-abdominal pressure or tension through the abdomen that obstructs your breath in a relaxed moment like we are right now because that will inhibit your ability to access your pelvic floor. So if I say that in another way, if you're walking around in the world trying to look a certain way or hold in your belly because you're not totally comfortable with that part of yourself, I've been there. I know that. I completely had to deprogram from all of that as well because I could feel how it was causing a lot of digestive disruptions as well as inhibitions in effective movement and strength training to my pelvic floor. So take a moment to first of all just relax in your own body. Don't worry when this is over. You can go back to sucking it in. Okay. But I want to change that experience for you.

So now that we're relaxing the abdominal wall, breathe deeply, you're doing great.

Yeah, can you feel how when you relax the abdominal wall, you might be able to sense beyond it now. Can you feel what your butt is sitting on.

Can you feel those bony pieces of your sit bones?

Can you pretend that your breath reaches all the way to your sits bones?

Now Pause.

You have lungs. Air only ever goes into your lungs. So if you hear me or any other teacher refer to a belly breath or breathing into the pelvis or the pelvic floor, that is metaphorical language to help you access that experience.

But even though The air only goes into my lungs when I breathe deeply and I relax that abdominal wall. My lungs can expand more fully. My rib cage is not inhibited so I get that three-dimensional expansion that

I've talked about in other classes. I can also feel my organs respond to my breaths. And this is so important because as I inhale and I take a very relaxed, full life-giving inhale,

my diaphragm will fire. It'll push down and my organs will be pushed towards my pelvic floor. Your pelvic floor, let's imagine it like a trampoline inside your pelvis.

Let's play with that image right here. Let's just breathe into that image a couple of times.

What is the quality of a trampoline when I say your pelvic floor is like a trampoline? What comes to mind?

A ability, a resilience, rebound.

So that's a very simplistic way to think of the pelvic floor, but it's very useful here. The pelvic floor is much more nuanced and complex in its structure and its execution. But right now the trampoline works really well. If I'm telling you when you take a really full, deep inhale. And those organs get pushed towards the pelvic floor. And the pelvic floor acts like a trampoline in which the fibers have to expand and be flexible enough to hold the weight of your organs moving down, especially if you have a full bladder, right? Or if you have a full meal. And then on your exhale, they're going to come And then you're going to return to a baseline tonality of where your pelvic floor normally sits.

That's already a pretty deep connection to this part of yourself if you were previously unaware of it.

So let's sit with that for a moment and embody that consciously. Inhale and feel, oh, if I relax my belly, my organs can move, which they should. And in this regard, your pelvic floor helps your organs to get a little bit of a massage, if you will, while you're breathing.

Great. We're going to say for now that that's enough in that exploration.

You can always spend more time with it. What I'm going to ask you to do is lie on your back.

And the reason I'm asking you to lie on your back is because now it's going to be even easier to feel the pelvic floor.

First of all, notice that gravity and my relationship with gravity has just changed, right? So you can see that when I breathe down towards my pelvis doesn't change because my body is experiencing it. But I have to first of all now incorporate the fact that I'm lying back and my organs are going to fall more to the back of my body. This is good. And in fact, my abdominal wall when it softens, it might even get a little bit of a hollowing out. That's just because of gravity.

But I'm going to put my hands below my belly button. So here's my belly button. I'm putting it on the soft tissue between my pubic synthesis, that hard bony protrudence in the front of your body that we just discussed. And here's your belly button.

And I'm going to breathe into that space. I'm putting my fingertips in that space. And Depending on who you are, you might have a large span in between those two markers, or you might be like me, short waist, and not have a whole lot, and you're, guess what? It still functions the same. Everything is great. So as I touch myself here, I'm breathing into my fingers.

As I exhale, I can feel how that soft tissue underneath my fingers pulls away slightly.

As I inhale,

I can send movement to this part of me pushing into my fingers. And then I can exhale,

feel it recede. One more time.

Now, this is how we approximate movement of the pelvic floor from the outside of your body. I am not touching my pelvic floor. That's much more internalized, and

that can happen with different kinds of practices. But for today, all I need you to do is now touch your sitting bones. The sitting bones are those bony pieces underneath your butt that you sit on, also known as your sits bones.

that awareness without a sense of urgency, without a rush, or judgment. Just breathe. You're doing great. Let's amp it up a little bit. Now that you can feel your sitting bones underneath your hands, and if lying down doing that doesn't work, stand up, sit, do whatever to touch yourself, okay? To your body, access it in the way you need to. All I'm going to ask you to do now is tilt your pelvis away from your face and you can see it creates a little tunnel under my back. I'm then going to bring my pelvis back. This is very similar to a preparation for Pilates hollow body or dead bug in other movement core work classes.

I'm going to inhale, roll away,

exhale, pull in. Now with this exhale, I'm going to start to make it a little stronger. And I'm going to imagine my sitting bones coming closer together.

So as I tilt my pelvis towards my face and I push my lower back into the floor, my sitting bones are going to come closer together. And then as I move the pelvis away from my face and I inhale, the sitting bones move apart. Great.

Let's play with that again. And if you need to touch, you touch.

If it helps you to touch here, touch you.

Now I'm leading you through the bony landmarks. Why? Because they're exterior and you can touch them and makes it easier.

But now I need you to tune into the soft tissue in between the bony landmarks.

Again, your body. So if you need to touch yourself, that's what you do.

Be in the privacy and safety of your own space and feel, keep moving, and feel how the soft tissue underneath your hand responds to this movement.

You're going to feel your butt probably a little bit too on the top. That's partially how the sitting bones also come together.

And you might say to yourself, well, I feel my genitalia, and that's completely fair. But you're going to think, oh, wait, the pelvic floor is beyond the genitalia.

It's deeper, right? So if you're touching the exterior of your body, I want you to think, well, What's moving my bones? Because bones, my sitting bones, don't move without muscle, moving them. And that's partly where that pelvic floor becomes very clear to you. I say partly because it still may not be exceedingly clear right now, but this is a movement that you can access and you can feel and imagine more deeply. And again, if you go online, if you access images, it makes that brain -body connection so much easier.

Can you deepen the inhale and the exhale? Exaggerated a little bit.

So the Helvic floor fibers are expanding in all different directions as those sitting bones move apart, and then they come together, top to bottom, side to side as well.

Amazing. Let's try this in a different way. Just one more way. I would love for you to stand up.

And that's so that you can feel, again, gravity. Gravity is a humongous ingredient of your experience here. I'm no longer lying the floor and now I'm in gravity. This is exceedingly important because gravity is a part of your embodied experience, even if you're unconscious of it. But when I'm talking about the strength of your pelvic floor, you have to be able to take an inhale.

That full deep inhale I was talking about earlier, enjoy it, and not be afraid of your organs falling out of your body. Guess what does that? Your pelvic floor. Also skin, yes, of course, but your pelvic floor is what's responsible. Again, the trampoline of expanding and being strong enough to hold those organs.

What if you have a full bladder? What if you have a full bladder and you have to pee or you have to sneeze, right? Then it's that gravitational relationship becomes pretty clear. And that is a normal part of your experience here. Sometimes you're told, especially if you're older, you've had any kind of sexual trauma, if you've had a given birth to a baby that, you know what? If you pee a little bit when you sneeze, that's just normal now. And it's embarrassing, so try not to talk about it or just deal with it quietly. And you know what? It is normal and it is part of aging in the body. I'm 42. I know what that's like. But guess what? You can also rehab it. So when you feel that ever, instead of being kind of like, oh, ashamed of it or just accepting it, you can take it as a body signal that says, hey, pay attention to me. I need you to work me just the way you work this muscle because I'm the same. So I want you to reinterpret any of those uncomfortable experiences and associations you had with this area of your body as this is an opportunity to heal, get closer to yourself, and get stronger.

Okay? So make it an empowered experience, create an opportunity for yourself to find strength where before you didn't have a lot of confidence or you didn't have a lot of awareness or you even had injury. So let me show you how that looks from the side because it's going to simulate a lot of what I was just doing on the floor. It's really the same thing, but now that I'm standing up, I can feel gravity assisting me with this, but I'm also going to be able to use both hands. And by the way, if I'm touching myself in a way that isn't accessible to you for any, for any reason, please make this practice your own. So if I have a hand here and a hand in front, you can also put both hands in front or just touch from the side, do anything that works for you. The idea is to use touch to help enliven your embodied experience and to also reclaim touching your own body without fear or shame.

I like this because then you can really see how I'm tilting my pelvis, just like I was on the floor, and then here's what we call the scoop. Again, in Pilates, Bar, or other core concentrated classes, this pelvic scoop is when I elongate my lower back. You can see that here. And it looks like I'm tensing my abdominals, and I am. But this is in the purpose of this class for you to feel your pelvic floor.

So I'm putting a hand underneath myself and one hand behind, and I can start to inhale,

feel the shape change underneath my hand, and then exhale. Again, feel the shape change underneath your hands.

Yes, you are touching the exterior of your body. Yes, you are mostly touching your genitals, but underneath is where the pelvic floor exists. So you are also getting a transmission of its movement. So it's just about tuning in. And again, look at those images. Go online. Get familiar. This is a part of yourself. Take responsibility for knowing this part of yourself.

Can you feel those sitting bones moving?

Can you hang out in this position with me here? So I'm doing the scoop. I've elongated my spine. My sitting bones have definitely come closer together and I'm going to learn to breathe here in this space so I don't have to hold this and go and then not be able to breathe no you can hold this position and breathe you'll notice you might be able to breathe comfortably but we won't be able to breathe this deeply because we are putting the pelvis into an anatomical position that demands of the pelvic floor actually remain more contracted shortened in its fiberling for the most

Yes, one more breath at me here. And then inhale, release.

And then you can feel the difference while you stay in this position. So what does this look like, cat cow, cat cow and yoga. Hang out, breathe, feel the difference in your breath. Feel how now you can send it down more deeply because it's more open. The sitting bones are open. That soft tissue space between your sitting bones is more accessible.

And if this work isn't completely new to you or you're very familiar with it or you're just really enjoying the sensing, can you feel what happens in your feet as you move this way? So we have a breath connection. We have that internal connection. And you can exaggerate. You can start to pull. You can act like you're pulling a force from the earth.

But can you bring it back to your anatomy and feel your feet?

Feel what's happening in the legs and feet.

You might feel a shift in your weight throughout your feet as you do this slightly, or you just might feel something and be like, well, what's happening? I don't even know. Well, I can tell you in part that when you're inhaling in this position with the sitting bones open, your feet are also, the muscles and the feet are responding to the movement to the muscles in your deep core and your pelvic floor. This is anatomically real. If I exhale, I start to also change the experience the muscles of my feet are getting.

So the reason I'm telling you this is because nothing in the body works in isolation. We're too complicated. We're too miraculous for that. So working on your pelvic floor not only is going to be great for your sexual health, healing, strengthening the body, giving you fullness of life, mobility, vitality, all of that. It's also going to affect parts of you that you may not be aware of. Legs, foot health. People with plantar fasciitis. Knee problems. This is exactly the kind of work that you should be incorporating into your program. This kind of pelvic

floor rehab can affect so much. So thank you for diving into this embodied experience with me. Play it again, repeat it, look at images, touch yourself, reclaim this part of yourself with touch and breath and visualization, and you're going to build a fantastic foundation for strength moving forward. Bye.