

## Strengthen Your Pelvic Floor for a Smoother Pregnancy & Labour

### Why Pelvic Floor Exercises Matter

Your pelvic floor is a group of muscles that support your uterus, bladder, and bowels. During pregnancy, these muscles stretch and work harder to accommodate your growing baby. Strengthening them can help:

- Reduce lower back and pelvic pain
- Prevent incontinence during and after pregnancy
- Support better posture and core stability
- Improve control and recovery after birth

### The Hammock of Support

Think of your pelvic floor as a hammock supporting your baby. A strong, flexible hammock keeps everything lifted and balanced, reducing strain on your body. A weak pelvic floor may lead to discomfort, pain, and a harder recovery postpartum.

### Pelvic Floor Exercises to Try

1. *Kegels*: Squeeze the muscles you would use to stop urine flow. Hold for 5-10 seconds, then relax. Repeat 10 times, 3 times a day.
2. *Bridge Pose*: Lie on your back, knees bent, and feet hip-width apart. Lift your hips while engaging your pelvic floor, then lower slowly. Repeat 10-15 times.
3. *Deep Squats*: Stand with feet wider than hip-width. Lower into a squat while keeping your back straight, then rise back up. This helps with pelvic mobility and strength.

### Benefits for Labour & Recovery

A well-conditioned pelvic floor can ease labour by allowing for better control during delivery and may reduce the risk of tearing. Post-birth, strong muscles help with healing, support, and reducing postpartum discomfort.

