



# Supporting Postpartum Pelvic Floor Healing

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Dr. Carlin Daley Reaume, OTD, OTR/L, PMH-C, PCES  
Doctor of Occupational Therapy



# Workshop Objectives

- ✓ Understand the anatomy of the pelvic floor.
- ✓ Understand the relationship between breath, posture, and body mechanics on pelvic floor health.
- ✓ Understand common physiological changes that occur within the pelvic floor during delivery and after giving birth
- ✓ Identify specific strategies to support pelvic floor healing after giving birth



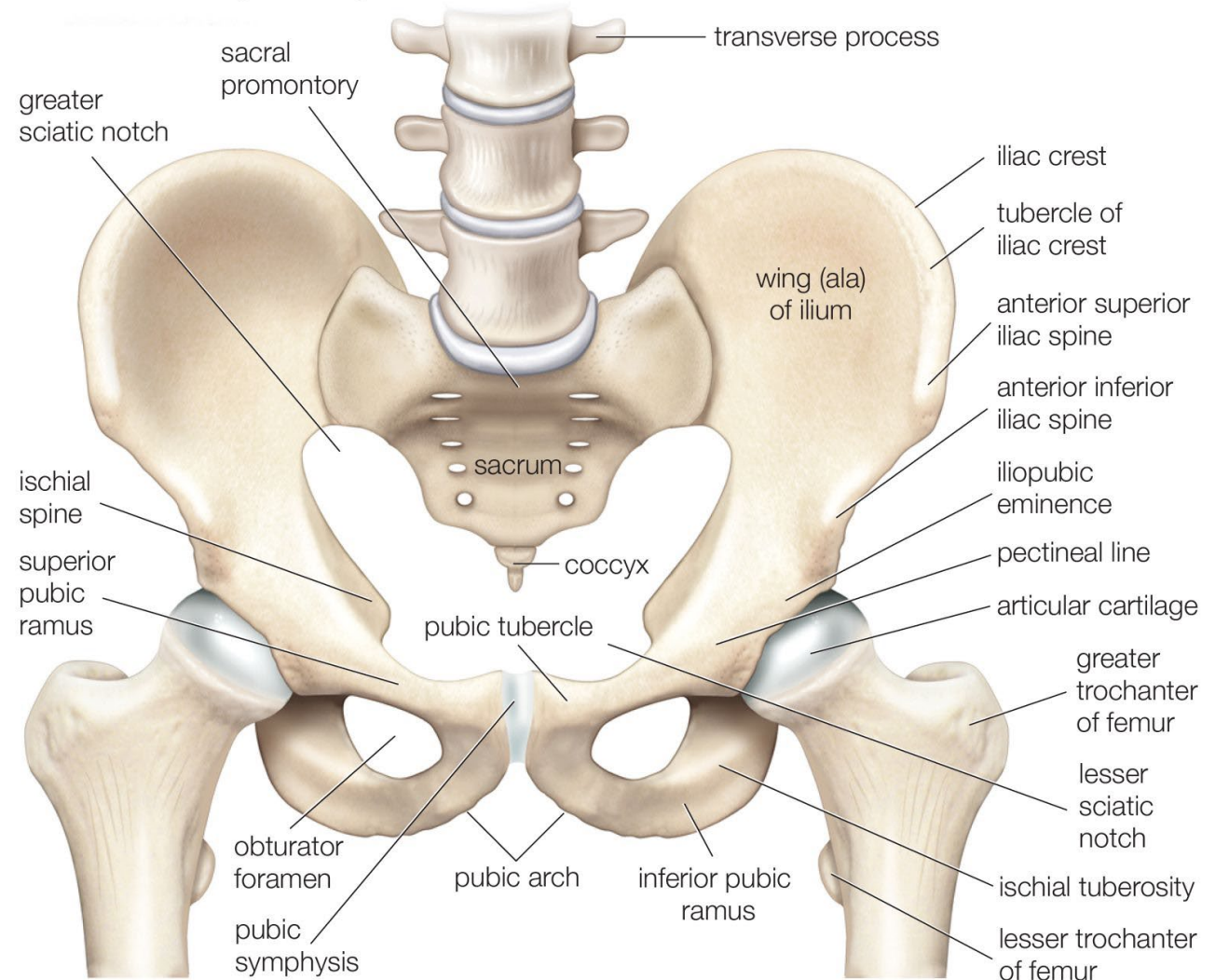
# About me...

- Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (OTD), University of Southern California
- Faculty, University of the Pacific
- Pelvic Floor Therapist, Supported Mama
- Pregnancy and Postpartum Corrective Exercise Specialist (PCES)
- Perinatal Mental Health Certification (PMH-C)

# Pelvic Floor 101

## Bony Landmarks

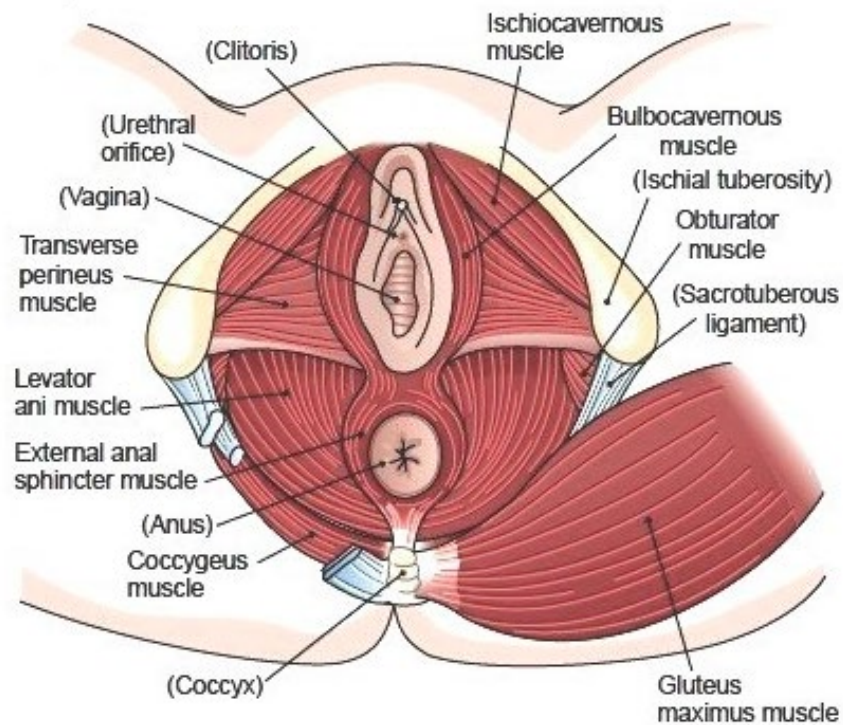
Bones of the pelvic girdle



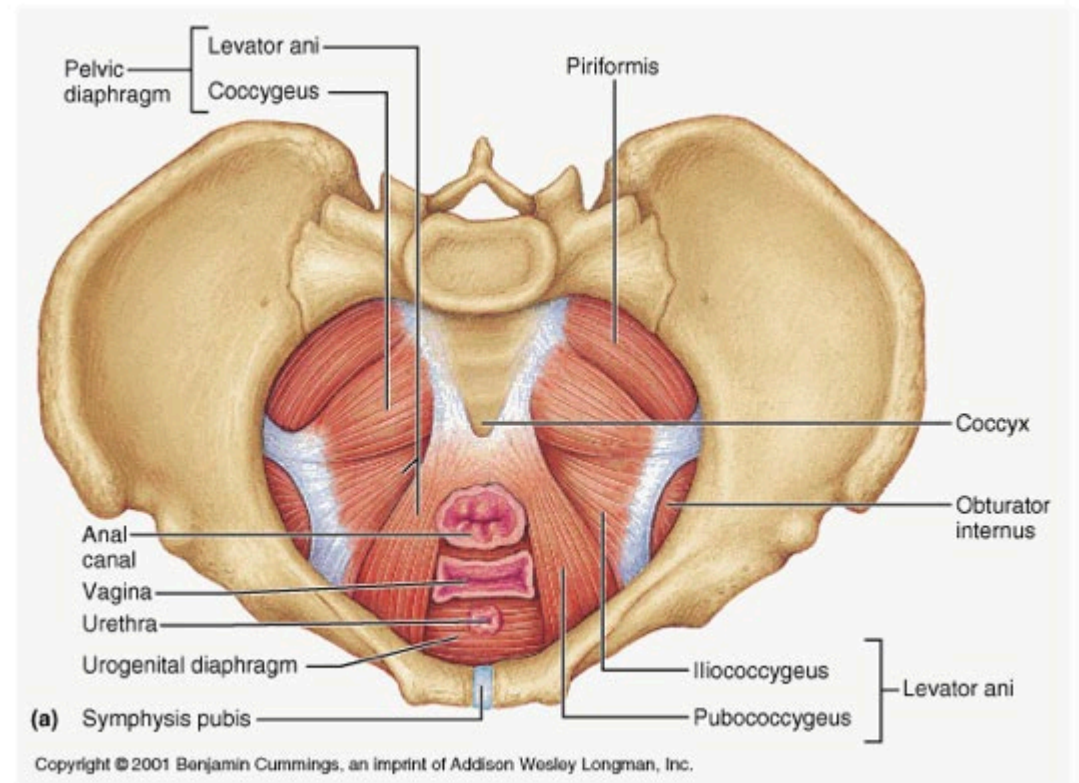


# Pelvic Floor 101

## Superficial Muscles



## Deep Muscles



What are  
the  
functions  
of the  
Pelvic  
Floor?

Support

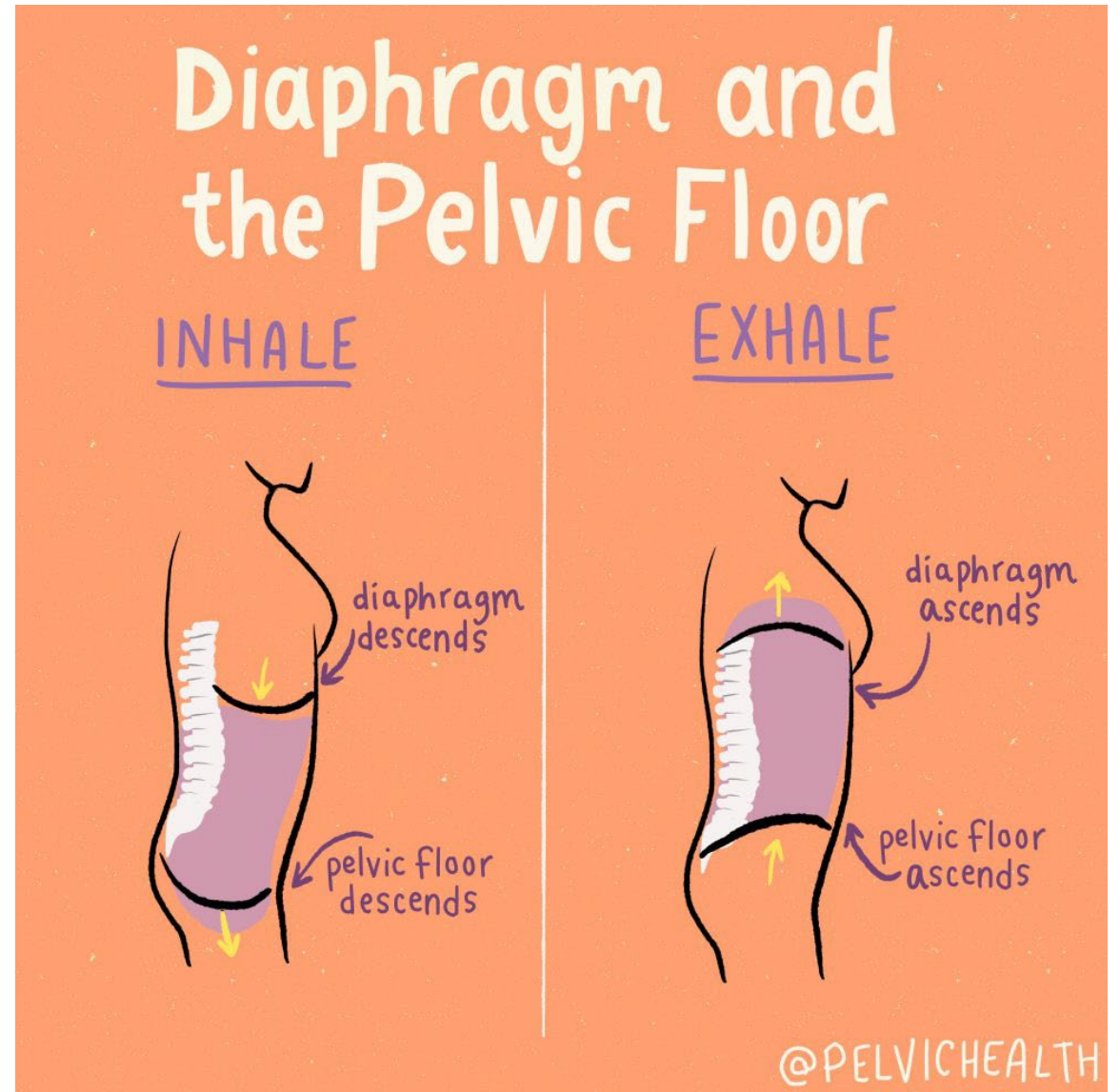
Sphincteric

Stability

Sexual

Sump-pump

# Relationship to Breath





Relationship to Posture & Body Mechanics



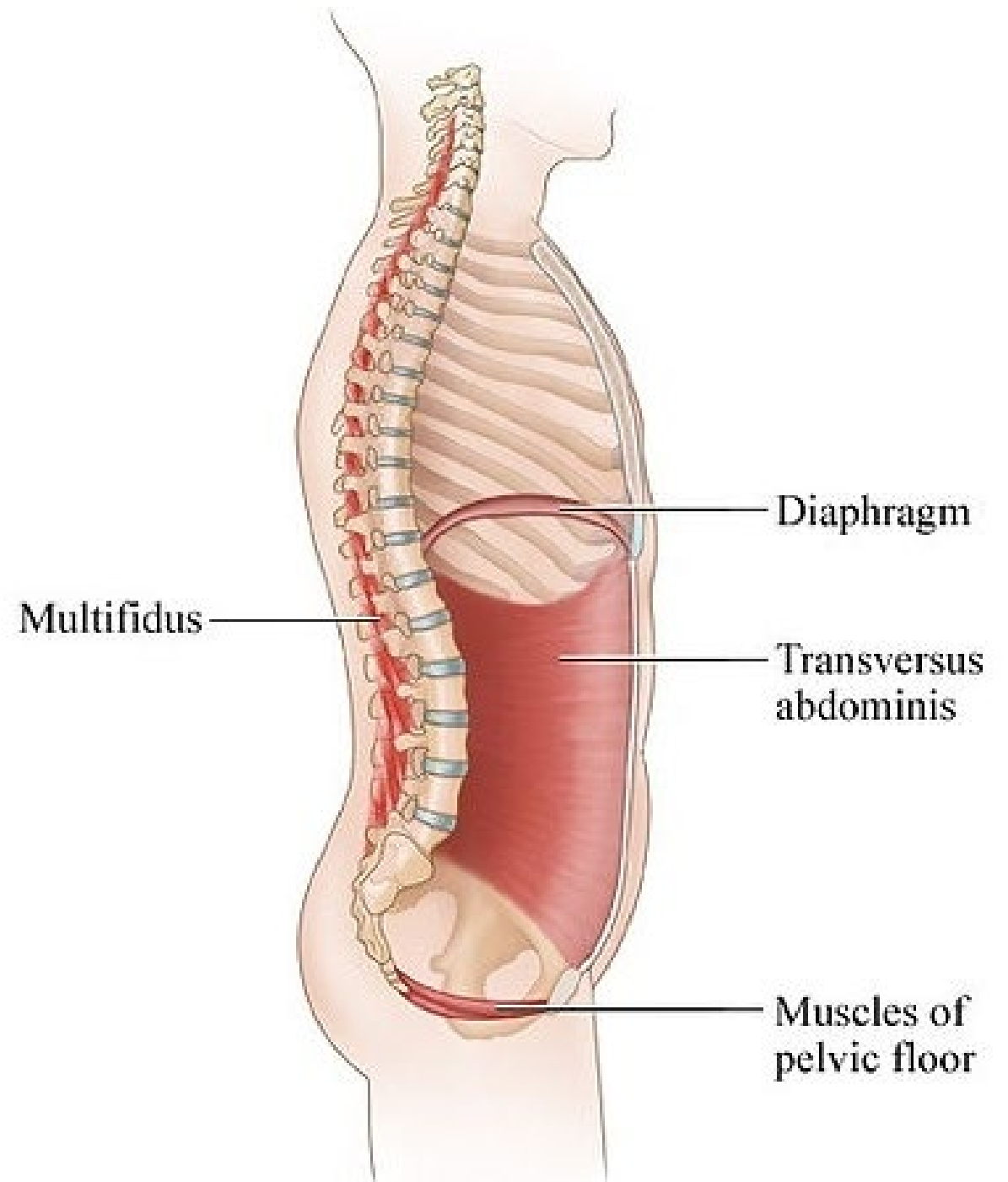


## Body Mechanics Considerations

- Repetitive daily tasks of newborn care
- Impact of the environment

## Body Mechanics: Intraabdominal Pressure (IAP)

- Relationship of PF to core muscles
- Impact of posture on coordination and IAP
  - Splayed ribs
  - Anterior/posterior pelvic tilt
- Impact of breath
  - Shallow breathing
  - Breath holding



# Common Perinatal Pelvic Floor Conditions

- Perineal tears
- Pelvic organ prolapse
- Urinary incontinence
- Hemorrhoids
- Pelvic pain (SPD)
- Diastasis Recti

Consider role of IAP management  
and muscle coordination  
in each of these...

# Strategies to Support Pelvic Floor Healing: Immediate Postpartum Phase



- **Healing & Rest**
  - Padsicles
  - Encourage rest
  - Avoid doing too much too quickly
- **Toileting Support**
  - Nourishment
    - Plenty of water/fiber
  - Position
    - Relax pelvic floor
    - Knees higher than hips
  - Breath
    - A gentle push with the exhale
  - Manage pressure
    - Apply pressure at perineum
    - Pillow against c-section incision



# Additional Strategies to Support Pelvic Floor Healing

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- 360 Degree Breath
- Gentle upper body stretching
  - Side bends
  - Open chest



# Perinatal Mental Health Considerations



- Lack of control
- Sense of disconnection
- Each day is “new”
- Shifting identity
- Performance expectations
- PMAD’s affects 1 out of 5 within first year of life (Postpartum Support International)

# Resources

- **Pelvic Health:**

- @the.vagina.whisperer
- @bodyreadymethod

- **Maternal Mental Health:**

- Maternal Health Hotline
  - 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)
- Postpartum Support International
  - free online support services





# Questions and Discussion

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Reduce overwhelm  
and feel nurtured.

A concierge pelvic health and maternal wellness service  
designed to support you as you transition into motherhood.

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THANK YOU!



CARLIN@SUPPORTEDMAMA.COM



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# References

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- Da Mota, P.G., Pascoal, A.G.B., Carita, A.I, & Bo, K. (2015). Prevalence and risk factors of diastasis recti abdominis from late pregnancy to 6 months postpartum, and relationship with lumbo-pelvic pain. *Manual Therap*7, 20(1), 200 – 205.
- Sperstad, J.B., Tennfjord, M.K., Hilde, G., Ellstrom-Engh, M., & Bo, K. (2016). *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50, 1092 – 1096.