INTRODUCTION TO
WOMEN’S HEALTH PHYSIOTHERAPY

A 5 Day Intensive Course

Women's Health is an exciting and ever expanding field of interest for many physiotherapists. Unfortunately, the ability to receive training in this field is somewhat limited, particularly for those entering the field for the first time.

The Women's Health Physiotherapy - 5 Day Intensive Course is aimed at physiotherapists with little or no experience in the field, and aims to provide a comprehensive introduction to all aspects of women's health physiotherapy. Topics will include assessment and treatment of Pelvic Floor dysfunction, pregnancy related musculoskeletal conditions, exercise in both standard and high risk pregnancy and physiotherapy for the postpartum woman.

**Day 1: Introductory Pelvic Floor Part 1**
Assessment & Diagnosis of the PF patient

**Day 2: Introductory Pelvic Floor Part 2**
Treatment Options for Women with PF Dysfunction

**Day 3: Complex Pelvic Floor - Postnatal**
Understanding Birth and its impact on the Pelvic Floor
The Postnatal Pelvic Floor Patient eg perineal trauma, bladder injury

**Day 4: Obstetric Physiotherapy Part 1**
Anatomical and Physiological changes of Pregnancy,
Morning and Midday Sessions - Pregnancy Related Back & Pelvic Pain
Other Pregnancy Conditions seen in Outpatient setting
(Breast conditions, abdominal conditions, varicosities, bone disorders, neural disorders etc)

**Day 5: Obstetric Physiotherapy Part 2**
Exercise Guidelines for Pregnancy, including CI and Precautions
High Risk Pregnancy and Exercise Prescription (including Gestational Diabetes)
**Afternoon Day 5- Case Studies covering topics from the entire week (ie Putting it all Together)**
Day 1: Introductory Pelvic Floor – Part 1 (Anatomy, Physiol, Diagnosis)

REGISTRATION at 8.30am Sharp

Session 1: 8.30 – 11.00am

Introduction and Welcome to the Course 15 minutes

Anatomy & Physiology: 2 hours
- Pelvis and Pelvic Floor
  Components and interplay of the pelvic floor: muscular, fascial and neural
- Urinary System:
  Kidneys, Ureters, Bladder, Urethra, Internal and External Urethral Sphincters, Physiology of Normal Voiding
- Digestive System
  Intestine, Rectum, Anal Canal, Internal and External Anal Sphincters, Physiology of Normal Defecation

Session 2: 11.20 – 1.10pm

11.00 – 12.00 Urinary Disorders
- Overactive Bladder - Stress Incontinence
- Urge Incontinence - Urinary Retention & Overflow

Session 3: 1.50pm – 3.10pm Prolapse and Defecation Disorders

1.50 - 2.30 Vaginal Prolapse
- Anterior Compartment: Cystocele, Urethrocele, Cystourethrocele
- Central Compartment: Uterine prolapse, Enterocele
- Posterior Compartment: Rectocele.

2.30 – 3.10 Anal Incontinence and Defecation Disorders
- Anal Incontinence: Faecal and Flatus
- Chronic Constipation: Slow Transit, Paradoxical Puborectalis
- Other: Faecal Impaction, Fistula

Session 4: 3.30 – 5.30pm Subjective History Taking

3.30 – 4.00 Lecture: Understanding Birth – basics required for subjective history taking
4.00 – 4.30 Lecture: Subjective History Questions – what to ask and what do they tell us?
4.30 – 5.30 Tutorial
During this tutorial the instructor will take on the role of a pelvic floor patient. Each student will be given a section of the subjective history to ask the “patient” (instructor). As the group listens to the patient’s responses each participant will complete a pro-forma subjective history assessment form.
**Day 2: Introductory Pelvic Floor – Part 2 (Assessment and Treatment)**

**Session 1:** 8.30- 9.00  
**CASE STUDY REVIEW**

The group works together to analyse the subjective histories performed the previous afternoon. The group brainstorms together to identify an accurate diagnosis for each patient.

**Session 2:** 9.00-11.00  
**LECTURE: Physio Ax of the PF pt – Part 1**

- **Lecture 1:** Vaginal Examination – Theory behind performing a vaginal examination
- **Lecture 2:** Further objective tests undertaken for a pelvic floor patient
  - Urinalysis
  - Cough Test / Paper Towel Test
  - 1 hour & 24hr Pad Test
  - Bladder Scanning
  - Uroflowmetry
  - Urodynamics

**Session 3:** 11.20-1.00  
**LECTURE & TUTORIAL – Bladder Diaries**

- **Lecture 11.20 – 11.50:** Bladder Diaries
- **Tutorial 11.50 – 1.00:** Bladder Diary Calculations

Actual bladder diaries will be given out and calculations completed. Participants will become confident in diagnosing a range of conditions via bladder diary analysis including decreased bladder capacity / increased bladder sensation, urgency, frequency, nocturnal polyuria index etc.

**Session 4:** 1.40 – 3.40  
**Physiotherapy Rx of the PF Pt – Part 1**

- **Lecture 1: 1.40-2.40:** Physiotherapy Treatments for Strengthening the Pelvic Floor
  - Establishing a Correct PFC
  - Electrical Stimulation
  - Vaginal Weights
- **Lecture 2: 2.40 -3.40**
  - Pelvic Floor Exercise Programming
  - Biofeedback
  - Vaginal Cones

**Session 5:** 4.00 – 6.30pm:  
**Vaginal Examination Practical Tutorial – Group 1**

- **Group 1:** Vaginal Examination Practical – A small group practical tutorial (3-4 participants) where participants learn to perform a vaginal examination. Please Note: Vaginal examination tutorials are offered at the end of days 2-5. Participants can place preferences for which day they wish to attend this component of the course. This tutorial is voluntary. Attendance requires participants to consent to both performing and having a vaginal examination.
Day 3: **Complex PF - The Postnatal Pelvic Floor Patient**

**Session 1: 8.30-11.00**  
*Treatment of the PF Patient – Part 2*

- **Lecture 1 8.30-10.00:** Physiotherapy Treatment for Prolapse  
  Physiotherapy Treatment for Defecation Disorders
- **Practical 1 10.00-11.00:** Putting it all together – case studies, Treatment planning etc

**Session 2: 11.20-1.20**  
*Labour, Birth and Pelvic Floor Trauma*

- **Lecture 1: 11.20 – 12.20**  
  Understanding Birth and Pelvic Floor Trauma:  
  Normal Birth, Forceps, Vacuum, Long 2\textsuperscript{nd} Stage, Size of Baby
  Pelvic Floor Trauma:
  - Tears: Defining 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} (3a, 3b, 3c) and 4\textsuperscript{th} Degree tears
  - Episiotomy
  - Pelvic Floor Avulsions
  - Other tears: vaginal, labial etc
  Impact of birth on Pudendal Nerve

- **Lecture 2: 12.20 – 1.20**  
  Management of Acute Perineal Trauma and Anal Sphincter Injuries
  RICE management of Acute Perineal Trauma
  Wound Support and Protection in the early weeks
  Long term muscle rehabilitation
  Initial Physiotherapy Management of 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} Degree Tears
  Follow Up?
  Advice for future births

**Session 3: 2.00 – 3.40**  
*Postnatal Incontinence? How does the assessment differ from the standard PF assessment?*

- Physiology of the Postnatal Bladder: How is sensation and capacity different?
- Postnatal Urinary Retention: Signs, Symptoms and Assessment options
- Stress and Urge Incontinence in the Postnatal Patient
- Assessment of the Pelvic Floor muscles immediately post birth?
- Treatment options for:
  - Decreased bladder sensation
  - Incomplete emptying
  - Urinary Retention
  - Stress Incontinence

**Session 4: 4.00-6.30**  
*Vaginal Examination Practical Tutorial – Group 2*

- **Group 2:** Vaginal Examination Practical – A small group practical tutorial (3-4 participants) where participants learn to perform a vaginal examination. Please Note: Vaginal examination tutorials are offered at the end of days 2-5. This tutorial is voluntary.
Day 4:  **Introduction to Obstetric Physiotherapy – Part 1**

**Topic 1: 8.30-9.30  Anatomy and Physiology of Pregnancy and Puerperium**

Anatomy & Physiology of Pregnancy
- Hormonal Changes
- Musculoskeletal Changes

**Topic 2: 9.30-10.40  Pregnancy Related Back and Pelvic Pain**

Understanding the aetiology of Pregnancy related back and pelvic Pain
Common Presentation / Signs and Symptoms
Assessment of the Pelvis – Including the European Guidelines on Pelvic Pain
- Using the ASLR diagnostically and for treatment determination
Treatment Options for Posterior Pelvic Pain in Pregnancy
Predicting Postnatal Prognosis for the Pelvic Pain Patient during Pregnancy

**11.00 – 12.30pm  Practical on Assessment of the Pregnant Pelvic Pain Pt**

- Pelvic Symmetry: Upslips, Downslips, Anterior and Posterior Rotations etc
- Mobility/Instability Tests: Stork Tests, Active Straight Leg Raise etc
- SIJ Diagnostic Tests: Posterior Pelvic Pain Tests, Faber Test, etc

**Topic 3: 1.10 – 3.00pm  Musculoskeletal Problems (excluding Back and Pelvis)**

General Musculoskeletal Conditions
- Carpal Tunnel
- Round Ligament Pain (and Braxton Hicks)
- Rectus Diastasis
- Bell’s Palsy of Pregnancy
- Breast Conditions – Blocked Ducts, Mastitis etc.

**3.10 – 3.50pm  Practical**

Taping and Splinting for Hand Conditions in Pregnancy and the Puerperium
ADL advice / hand hold positions for breastfeeding and baby care to prevent pain and injury
Assessing Rectus Diastasis – digital and with dial callipers
Compression stockings and garments for pregnancy

**Session 4: 4.00-6.30  Vaginal Examination Practical Tutorial – Group 2**

**Group 3: Vaginal Examination Practical** – A small group practical tutorial (3-4 participants) where participants learn to perform a vaginal examination. Please Note: Vaginal examination tutorials are offered at the end of days 2-5. This tutorial is voluntary.
Day 5: Obstetric Physiotherapy – Part 2

Session 1: 9.00 – 12.00pm  EXERCISE IN PREGNANCY

- **Exercise Guidelines for Pregnancy**
  - The History of Exercise in Pregnancy Guidelines
  - Current Exercise Guidelines – Contra-indications and Precautions

- **High Risk Pregnancies – Implication for Exercise**
  - Understanding the CI and Precautions
  - Incompetent Cervix
  - Multiple Pregnancy
  - Placenta Praevia
  - High Blood Pressure / Pre-Eclampsia

- **Exercise Prescription for Gestational Diabetes**
  - Gestational Diabetes
  - Exercise Prescription for Gestational Diabetes.

Session 2: 12.40- 3.20pm  Women’s Health Case Studies

In the final section of the course physiotherapists are encouraged to put all they have learnt together. Brief case studies will be presented, with participants then brainstorming in small groups, the possible diagnosis, which objective tests are indicated and the possible treatment regime that should be implemented.

12.40 – 2.00:  Obstetric Physiotherapy Case Studies – MS, High Risk Exercise, Other
2.00 – 3.20:  Pelvic Floor Case Studies

Session 4: 3.30-6.00 pm  Vaginal Examination Practical Tutorial – Group 4

Group 4:  **Vaginal Examination Practical** – A small group practical tutorial (3-4 participants) where participants learn to perform a vaginal examination. Please Note: Vaginal examination tutorials are offered at the end of days 2-5. This tutorial is voluntary.