



Your Initial Appointment at SWB

History and Pelvic Health: The SWB Physiotherapist will take a detailed medical history. Your physio will discuss your specific prolapse symptoms, pain, urinary or fecal incontinence, sexual function, bladder and bowel health.

Pelvic Exam: With your consent, your SWB Physiotherapist may perform an internal examination to assess your prolapse and your pelvic floor muscles.

Your individualised treatment plan may include:

Education: About your condition and factors contributing to your prolapse.

Pelvic Floor Exercises: You will receive guidance on specific pelvic floor exercises (Kegel exercises) tailored to your needs to help strengthen and support your pelvic floor.

Lifestyle Modifications: You will receive advice on lifestyle changes that can help manage and prevent further prolapse.

Pessary Information: At your initial appointment, your physio may begin to discuss whether a pessary could assist your prolapse. It is rare that pessaries are fitted at your initial consultation. Depending on the severity of your condition and your progress, you will have follow-up appointments to monitor your improvement and make adjustments to your treatment plan if necessary.

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Physiotherapy and Prolapse

Physiotherapy plays a crucial role in prolapse management. Your Secret Women's Business (SWB) Physiotherapist will work with you to achieve your specific goals, which might include reducing prolapse symptoms, improving bladder and bowel health and improving pelvic floor strength. Our experienced SWB Physiotherapists have advanced training in pessary fitting and we keep onsite an extensive range of styles and sizes of pessaries. An SWB physiotherapist can provide pessary fitting and ongoing management (offering guidance on insertion, removal and maintenance.)

Physiotherapy for prolapse and pessary management is a specialised field of physiotherapy requiring a personalised approach. Physiotherapy aims to improve your quality of life, reduce symptoms and help you better manage your condition. The number of appointments required will depend on your individual needs and progress.

Pessary Support for Prolapse

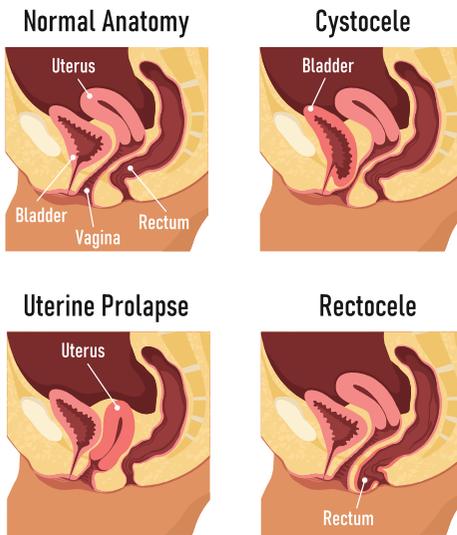
Your SWB Physiotherapist may discuss with you whether a pessary could assist your prolapse. A pessary is a removable device, inserted into your vagina, to support the vaginal walls and/or uterus. Pessaries fitted by SWB are made from silicone and can significantly reduce the sensations of heaviness and vaginal bulge.

It is rare that pessaries are fitted at your initial consultation as it is important to address other lifestyle and pelvic health concerns first. Some women will require medication to assist in preparing the vaginal tissues prior to fitting.

It is safe to use pessaries both in the short and longer term. A well fitted pessary can improve your level of comfort and also improve the functioning of bladder and bowels. Some specific pessaries are fitted to assist with reducing urinary leaking. Pessaries are fitted by our experienced physiotherapy team and it can take several appointments and pessary trials to find the right size and style for you.



Understanding Prolapse



Prolapse occurs when pelvic organs descend from their normal positions and may protrude into the vagina. It is a common condition and can often be managed effectively with physiotherapy and lifestyle adjustments.

Pelvic organs include your bladder, uterus (womb) and rectum. Pelvic organ prolapse occurs when one or more of these organs bulges against, or sags down into the vagina and the muscles and ligaments in the pelvic floor become stretched, or too weak to hold the organs in the correct place.

Prolapse can occur in the front wall of the vagina (cystocele), back wall of the vagina (rectocele), uterus (uterine) or top of the vagina (vault). You can have prolapse of more than one organ at the same time.

Vaginal prolapse is common, affecting up to half of adult women. Causes include family history, pregnancy and childbirth, aging and menopause, obesity, chronic cough, chronic constipation, and heavy lifting. Prolapse can also occur following hysterectomy and other pelvic surgeries. Prolapse can significantly affect your quality of life.

The team of physiotherapists at Secret Women's Business (SWB) have extensive advanced training in all areas of prolapse management.

Healthy Bladder and Bowel Habits

Maintaining healthy bladder and bowel habits is vital for managing prolapse symptoms and overall pelvic health:

- Stay hydrated. Both your bladder and your bowels will benefit from a moderate amount of fluid, nicely spaced through the day.
- Ensure you consume a healthy, balanced diet that is high in fibre. Most Australians do not get enough fibre. Your physiotherapist will discuss your bowel habits and work out strategies to assist regular motions. It is essential that as you increase fibre you drink adequate fluids. Some experts suggest you aim for 30 different plant based foods a week – your tummy will thank you for it!
- Avoid straining during bowel movements. A diet rich in fibre, along with good fluid intake can help regulate bowel movements. Straining will worsen prolapse symptoms and weaken your pelvic floor. Eliminating straining is an essential part of prolapse management and there are several different strategies your physiotherapist may discuss to eliminate straining.



Strengthening Your Pelvic Floor



- Your SWB Physiotherapist will firstly ensure you can correctly engage your pelvic floor muscles. It is critical this is checked to make sure you are not accidentally bearing down or stretching the pelvic floor. When correctly activated, the pelvic floor helps to lift and support your pelvic organs. If performed incorrectly, your prolapse symptoms can worsen!
- Your SWB Physiotherapist will prescribe a pelvic floor strengthening program. Practicing your pelvic floor exercises will enhance muscle control and improve support for your pelvic organs.
- Your SWB Physiotherapist will also teach you how to contract your pelvic floor muscles during day to day activities including when you lift, cough or sneeze. We call this "the knack", don't forget to use it!
- Struggling to remember your pelvic floor exercises? Research shows joining a weekly supervised exercise class that includes pelvic floor exercises (like Core Gymball) can make a huge difference to strengthening. Or consider downloading an app such as 'Easy Kegel' (free) or 'Squeazy (NHS)' (small cost) and set the reminders.