



## The MAMMI Study

### Tip of the week: Remembering to do pelvic Floor Exercises, Maria's Story.

Hi, my name is Maria and this tip is on how I remember to doing pelvic floor exercises regularly and why they are so important.

Let's get straight to it. Before pregnancy, I was perfectly healthy person with no bother in life. I never thought for a split second I could have urine incontinence...I never knew those things happen or knew anyone who suffered it. Well, how wrong was I! It turns out there are many women suffering from urine incontinence caused either by pregnancy, complicated delivery, heavy exercises or changes in the body during the menopause. It affects many of my friends and family members...but no one is speaking about it, no one is seeking help, no one knows what to do and how doing pelvic floor exercises can bring about great results and an end to incontinence.

Often if women do know to do the exercises, they simply forget to do them!

I personally don't recall any medical staff or healthcare professional telling me to do my pelvic floor exercises when I was pregnant to prepare my pelvis for the delivery. I do recall a physiotherapist telling me to do the exercises a few hours after the delivery...but that was it... and being, just after the delivery, being like, upset and in pain, and confused probably to some point, resulted in me just not doing them often enough, which again led to even more trouble with my pelvic muscles and prolapse.

*So, nobody emphasised them, nobody told me the consequences of not doing them, like to this day this still upsets me. Like, I had to wait for problems to happen to me before really understating the importance of doing my exercises.*

Having a new born baby and potentially other children at home, car seats, strollers, shopping bags, washing baskets, you name it....it's not easy to ensure we don't put strain on our pelvis when it's in such a vulnerable time for it. I only starting working on and doing my exercises when my condition worsened. My advice to you, my advice to all women is don't wait for problems to happen – prevent problems like incontinence by seeing pelvic floor exercises as essential to your health and wellbeing.

There are many ways you can help yourself to remember to do the exercises every day. For example,

Identify a time in your day that you can dedicate just to pelvic exercises, it could be as a part of your morning routine after getting up from the bed or it could be your evening routine before going to bed, or even while you're lying in bed already.

When I had my first baby, I was doing exercises each time I was feeding her, which was a few times a day. It also took a while for me to get to know what I was doing.

I was that serious about it that I was setting reminders on my phone for the first few weeks, just to get me going and implement it into my everyday routine. As my baby grew, I adapted this



routine to fit with my life and increase the intensity of the routine, until I mastered the exercises while lying down or sitting, and then I would do the exercises when putting baby to sleep and comforting her while standing by the cot.

If you are driving for example, for work you could do it while in the traffic – but make sure you have enough time to do a full cycle of exercises.

What works for me is the time when I simply can't go anywhere in that specific time, like being stuck in the traffic, putting my baby asleep or feeding the baby...there's nothing else you can do during that time. You do need this time to concentrate on the exercises and you only need 5 minutes a day to do them, and doing them consistency has really helped me so far and is helping me regain my confidence in my body. My tip is do them, do them regularly and don't wait for a problem like incontinence to happen to you – prevent it with pelvic floor exercises.