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HOW TO MANAGE

Your

PELVIC PAIN

during pregnancy

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Pelvic Girdle Pain (PGP) is a common discomfort experienced by many pregnant women, affecting the pelvic joints and muscles. PGP is a collection of uncomfortable symptoms caused by a stiffness of your pelvic joints or the joints moving unevenly at either the back or front of your pelvis.

This guide aims to provide valuable information on the prevalence, typical symptoms, and effective management strategies for PGP during pregnancy. We will explore the use of pelvic girdle supports, the importance of seeking a physical therapy evaluation, and include a set of basic exercises designed to alleviate PGP symptoms.



Prevalence:

PGP is a prevalent condition during pregnancy, affecting approximately 20% of pregnant women. It is characterized by pain in the pelvic region, including the sacroiliac joints (SIJ) and pubic symphysis.

HERE ARE THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS OF PGP:

Difficulty walking, climbing stairs, or changing positions.

Pain and discomfort in the lower back, pelvic area, hips, and thighs.

Clicking or grinding sensations in the pelvic joints.

Increased discomfort with activities such as standing for prolonged periods or lifting.

Managing Pelvic Girdle Pain

One of the most frequent recommendations I offer to my patients is to consider using a pelvic girdle support during pregnancy to effectively manage symptoms. These supports provide a beneficial lift to your belly or offer compression to the pelvis, significantly enhancing the sense of support during various movements. It's crucial to emphasize that continuous wear of these supports is not advised. Instead, it is recommended to use them selectively, particularly when engaged in activities such as housework, walking, bending, lifting, or during exercise if necessary. It's worth noting that there is a variety of support options available, and individual preferences may vary. Some women find greater relief with specific types of supports over others. Let's go through the options together:

01 Belly band support

A belly band provides support to the lower abdomen and helps distribute the weight of the baby more evenly. This can reduce strain on the pelvic joints and alleviate discomfort. The band pictured here is from Bao Bei Belly.



02 Sacroiliac Joint (SIJ) Belt

A sacroiliac joint belt differs from the belly band support as it hugs your pelvic bones together and is meant to be worn low on your hips. The one pictured here is from Serola.



03 Kinesiotaping (KT Tape)

The last type of support that some women like during pregnancy is Kinesiotape. By applying tape from the bottom to top of the belly, it can provide a nice lift and take pressure off the pelvis. Most tapes are latex free, but sometimes can cause irritation. Please remove if itchy or bothersome.



Exercise Recommendations

Maintaining an exercise regimen while experiencing pelvic girdle pain can contribute significantly to functional movements and the strengthening of hip and core muscles, crucial for childbirth. Individuals grappling with acute PGP are advised to steer clear of exercises involving a single-leg stance, such as lunges and step-ups, as these movements can potentially exacerbate pelvic discomfort. Instead, the initial focus should be on deep core strengthening, as well as glute and inner/outer hip exercises, which collectively enhance stability in the pelvic region. As pain diminishes, gradual reintroduction of single-leg strengthening exercises can be considered. Below are some recommended exercises to initiate this process:

01 Deep Abdominal Squeezes

First place your finger tips on the bony front part of your pelvis. Then, walk your fingers just inside so now you are touching your lower abdominals. Use that diaphragmatic breath on the inhale, then slowly exhale as you try to tighten the muscles under your fingers. You can think about zipping up a tight pair of pants, or bringing your hips to ribs, or lifting your pubic bone up. Make sure you don't flatten your back with this movement, the spine should really stay still.



02 Tall Kneeling Hip-Hinge

This is a great exercise to start to work on strengthening through your gluteals. Start in a kneeling position, then send your hips back towards your heels. Upon return, work on squeezing your glutes at the top of the movement. You can work on timing breath with movement by inhaling on the way down, and exhaling on the way back up. You can also modify this movement by holding onto the back of a chair or shortening the movement arc.



03 Seated Hip Abduction

This is a great exercise to gently wake up your outer hip muscles, also known as your hip abductors. Find a belt or yoga strap and fasten it around your knees. As you exhale, press your knees out gently against the strap. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10-15 times. Only press outwards to tolerance



04 Seated Hip Adduction

This exercise focuses on your inner thigh stability, also known as your adductors. Find a pillow or blanket and place in between the knees. As you exhale, squeeze your knees together for 5 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times. Only squeeze as much as tolerable and not into painful ranges.



Did You Know?



Working one-on-one with a Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist offers distinct advantages, allowing you to tailor a specific mobility and strengthening routine tailored to your needs and preparation for labor and delivery. The therapist, through a personalized assessment, provides individualized recommendations based on your unique presentation. They can provide valuable knowledge on birthing positions and effective pushing techniques, empowering you with confidence as you approach labor. This personalized approach ensures that you receive targeted guidance to address your specific concerns.

Seeking Professional Assessment for Comprehensive Care



Managing Pelvic Girdle Pain during pregnancy involves a holistic approach, including the use of supports such as belly bands, SIJ belts, and kinesiotape. Additionally, seeking a physical therapy evaluation and incorporating targeted exercises into your routine can enhance your comfort and prepare you for labor and delivery. Always consult with your healthcare provider before beginning any new exercise program.



If you have any questions about these tips, give us a call at (720) 500 - 7450 or email us at admin@movementphysioco.com

Hope this helps!

Take care,

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