



THE OT'S MAP TO
THE WORLD OF
PELVIC HEALTH



I'm Lindsey Vestal! I'm an Occupational Therapist (OT) who trains other OTs to become kick ass pelvic floor therapists.



Along the way, I've noticed the world of pelvic health can feel so big, that it can be overwhelming for those who are curious to learn more. You could even relate it to visiting a foreign country without so much as a guidebook!

As pelvic health is an emerging field, research and practice standards can be difficult to find. It can take hours of detective work on the Internet just to cobble together a hazy view. Rather than feeling like you're meandering, let's take this amazing wanderlust and give it some direction.



Exploration begins with common questions, such as, what skills do I need? Who can I work with? Where can I work? These questions are signposts, pointing to your personal path. You will flourish as your knowledge grows through trusted networking communities and evidence-based training.

As your tour guide, I pride myself on making complex ideas more accessible. Let's take a look at the key landmarks together by using this resource I created, mapping out OT core values, approaches, populations, settings, and common modalities.

Pack your bags! The next steps in your journey are:

- Sign up for the **OTs in Pelvic Health** FB group. Join thousands of OTs who are already trekking through this rewarding landscape with their new-found community.
- Join the waitlist for **OT Pioneers: Intro to Pelvic Floor Therapy for Occupational Therapists** where I demystify pelvic anatomy/function, external/internal exams, help you master the art of the intake, and provide motivational methods to engage clients. This course is open to all practitioners interested in pelvic health.

Yours in pelvic health,

Lindsey



Integrated Pelvic Floor Core Values

to work with your client globally



Problem-solving



Empowerment



Motivational
interviewing



Education/Instruction



Empathy +
active listening



Advocacy



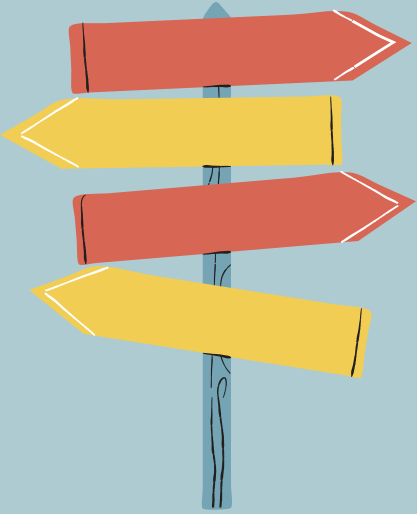
Collaboration



Informed consent



PELVIC FLOOR APPROACHES



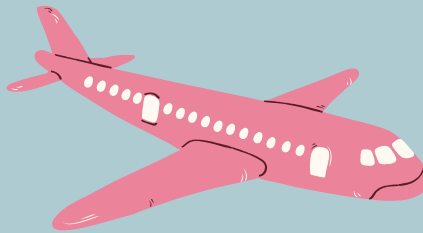
Pelvic Health is a multifaceted field that leverages a variety of approaches for optimal outcomes. Consider these approaches as unique tools in one's clinical toolbox.

While some approaches may be more readily utilized, frequently a blending of approaches best aligns with each client's unique perceptions, strengths, and concerns.



Neuromuscular Re-education

- Downtraining
- Uptraining
- Interoception training
- Motor sensory awareness training
- Neural glides



Sexual Health

- Adaptive equipment
 - Dilators
 - Wands
 - Lubrication
 - Penetration bumpers
- Neuro re-education
- Preparatory techniques
- Positioning training
- Body awareness and arousal process



Trauma-Informed Care

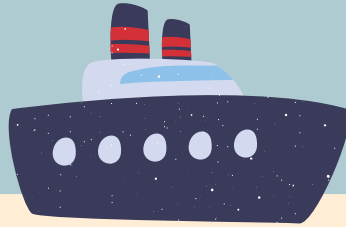
- Empower via choices
- Nervous system regulation
 - Polyvagal theory
 - Self-compassion practice
 - Breathing techniques
 - Mindfulness
 - Yoga
- Foster ownership
- Client experience vs. factual timeline

PELVIC FLOOR APPROACHES



Manual Skills

- **Adhesion reduction**
 - Muscle Energy Techniques
 - Myofascial release
 - Skin rolling
 - Soft tissue mobilization
 - Scar tissue
 - Massage
 - Mobilization
 - Visceral mobilization
 - Musculoskeletal mobilization
- **Joint mobilization**
- **Nerve release**
- **Energy flow assessment**



Behavioral Re-education

- **Bowel + bladder training**
 - Diaries + routines
 - Toileting positioning
 - Breathing strategies
 - Lifestyle modifications
- **Functional movement**
 - Intra-abdominal pressure management
 - Continent transfers
 - Home/community mobility
 - ADL/IADLs: dressing, lifting, exercise, item retrieval
- **Home exercise program**
 - Posture education
 - Stretching/lengthening
 - Strengthening
 - Coordination
 - Graded exposure
 - Interoceptive + sensory
- **Self-care**
 - Nutrition + sleep
 - Pain/stress management
 - Energy conservation
 - Vulvar care, pessary support, menstrual health
 - Toileting hygiene aids



Mental Health

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for ADL/IADLs**
- **Nervous system regulation**
(see Trauma-Informed Care)
- **Perception**
 - Neuroception cues
 - Positive self-talk/image
- **Practice**
 - Meditation + mindfulness
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Stress response training
 - Social connection practices
- **Psychoeducation**
 - Perinatal mental health conditions
 - Resources: medical, social, peer support
 - Maternal brain changes + impact on routines
 - Lifestyle: light exposure, nutrition, sleep, movement

POPULATIONS



The demand for pelvic floor support is far reaching. It is not restricted to any one gender, age, or demographic group. Common populations include:



MODALITIES

Pelvic floor dysfunctions may present a spectrum of overt or nuanced symptoms, requiring an equally impressive range of modalities for progressive treatment. In certain cases, clients may be instructed to apply modalities between formal treatment sessions. Other interventions are only administered by the therapist.



SETTINGS

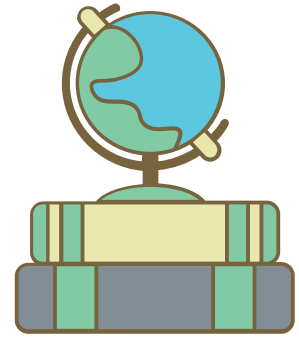
The settings in which clients receive pelvic floor support are diverse, fluid, and dynamic.

Occupational therapists collaborate with clients in various contexts to analyze habits, routines, performance patterns, body functions, and belief systems in the midst of daily activities.

A client's "health, identity, and sense of competence"¹ can be progressed in any setting.



REFERENCES



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CREDITS

This content is powered by Lindsey Vestal of the Functional Pelvis, with support from Kristen Carnes, pelvic floor occupational therapist, and Katie Caspero of OT Graphically. You both always had the compass out to keep us headed in the right direction!

