

“Nobody talks about this stuff” - a young, fit mother talks to Pelvicfloor.nz about her harrowing experience with pelvic floor dysfunction.



As a young, healthy mum of one, Lesley Ranford - like most people - had never given much thought to the condition of her pelvic floor. The extent of her focus was perhaps a few preventative pelvic floor exercises done during pregnancy - which her girlfriends, mum and even midwife had assured her would keep things 'as good as can be expected' after childbirth.

No further information was made available to her regarding pelvic floor safety, incontinence prevention or any related issue - nor were these things Lesley had ever discussed with her doctor or personal trainer.

But at 31, did she need to worry?

We're in an age where nutrition, exercise and supposed holistic health are high priorities and most women of Lesley's age would consider themselves well educated about their bodies and what good self-care looks like. Yet there remains a stubborn - and harmful - taboo around the topics of incontinence and the pelvic floor - a taboo that leads to dangerous yet completely preventative cases, like this one.

After a traumatic birth, followed by a few stitches, Lesley sought comfort in her regular gym workouts that had always helped with her mental well-being as well as her fitness. " I noticed a kind of bulging, heavy feeling in that area" she explains " It was very sore... almost like bad menstrual pain. I really just tried to work through it and was exercising as I normally would; nobody had advised me to do any different. Then over Christmas, when I took a break from the gym, the pain became less." Eventually a friend convinced Lesley to see a physio. "The physio I saw was at the local hospital and she told me point blank that I would never be able to exercise the way I had before my I had my baby. I had a Stage 2 bladder prolapse and a hypertensive pelvic floor - I didn't even know there was such a thing! And apparently, there was very little I could do about it." Lesley was devastated - not only to learn she had a serious and untreatable condition but also to be told that her beloved workouts would have to stop. Forever. Thankfully, she sought a second opinion - this time from a physio specialising in pelvic floor matters. "I can't believe it" Lesley says. "After a few minutes with her I learnt that there were so many things I'd been doing incorrectly, different kinds of exercises especially that I shouldn't have been. I was making things worse. Nobody talks about this stuff - my midwife didn't talk about it, nor my GP, nor my gym trainer,nor the first physio I saw."

In a matter of weeks Lesley's condition has improved dramatically and - amazingly - she's now been told that things can, with work, absolutely return to normal.

"It's so important that people, especially women, are informed. It really wouldn't take much for pelvic floor health to be a topic brought up at GP visits... especially post birth.

It's just incredible to me how in the dark I was."

Exercise NZ and the Register of Exercise Professionals have joined forces with

Continence NZ to educate fitness professionals on pelvic floor safe exercise. Ask your trainer about pelvic floor safe exercise.

To learn more about maintaining a strong pelvic floor at any age go to;

www.pelvicfloor.nz