



WEIGHTLIFTING AND CROSSFIT: PELVIC FLOOR FRIEND OR FOE?

Even if you've never tried CrossFit, you probably know someone who has. A high-intensity fitness program that combines weightlifting, gymnastics, and metabolic conditioning exercises, CrossFit has exploded in popularity since it first emerged onto the fitness scene more than 15 years ago.

The rapid, high-intensity ballistic movements of CrossFit make it particularly effective at burning fat and building muscle. But is it safe?

This question has been a matter of contentious debate for some time and has even prompted at least **one study** to determine how CrossFit stacks up against other forms of exercise in terms of safety.

We want to answer the question, "Is CrossFit healthy for women?" More specifically, are CrossFit and weightlifting safe for the pelvic floor—the hammock-like system of muscles that hold your pelvic organs firmly in place? **Here's what we've found.**

CrossFit: Not Just for Men

Traditional weightlifting and CrossFit are not just for men. Women can enjoy the health benefits, too. But, women are built differently and are more vulnerable to pelvic floor injuries.

When not done properly, CrossFit and traditional weightlifting moves can put excessive strain on the pelvic floor. This can lead to pelvic organ prolapse, which is when an organ (such as the uterus) slips from its normal position and presses on other organs.

Prolapsed organs are a common cause of stress urinary incontinence (UI). When the uterus presses on the bladder, for example, you can leak urine when you strain from laughing, coughing, sneezing, or doing strenuous exercise moves, like squats. You can help prevent UI by strengthening your pelvic floor muscles with the **PeriCoach Kegel trainer**.

Now, somewhat paradoxically, when done properly, weight-bearing exercise can improve core strength which can help prevent prolapse and stress UI. **The key is performing the exercises correctly.** This should be your primary focus—not forcing your body to keep up or impressing your trainer.

Women Who Should Use Extreme Caution When Doing CrossFit

The very nature of CrossFit—its intensity and rapid pace—can place too much pressure on the pelvic floor for some women. If any of the following apply to you, use extreme caution when doing CrossFit or weightlifting, or opt for an alternative exercise routine altogether.

- You're in postnatal recovery.
- You've had one or more previous vaginal deliveries.
- You've had a traumatic vaginal delivery (such as a breech birth).
- You have a family history of pelvic organ prolapse.
- You have chronic constipation with straining.
- You have a chronic cough (e.g. from smoking or emphysema).
- You have obesity or are significantly overweight.
- You are menopausal.

Avoid These CrossFit Moves to Prevent Pelvic Floor Problems

If any of the above apply to you, but you decide to proceed with caution, it's best to avoid the following common types of CrossFit moves.

Metabolic	Weightlifting	Gymnastics
Box jumps	Barbell dead lift (with heavy weights)	Pull ups
Heavy bag work	Medicine ball squat dead lift	Push ups
Kettlebell or dumbbell swings	Kettlebell squat	Ab curls and crunches
Weighted stair climbing	Leg presses (all kinds)	Traditional sit-ups
Box-stepping	Tire flip	Box jumps

Takeaways

- CrossFit is not just for men, but women should use caution and, if needed, modify their CrossFit routine to protect their pelvic floor.
- Women should focus on proper technique and properly balancing weight loads.
- Consult with your doctor/physiotherapist before starting a CrossFit routine.
- Give your body time to heal after childbirth.
- Do regular Kegel exercises to improve your pelvic floor strength.

Summary

Is CrossFit healthy for women? PeriCoach unpacks this question and addresses how CrossFit and traditional weightlifting can impact the pelvic floor.

About PeriCoach

PeriCoach is an FDA-cleared, vaginally insertable Kegel exercise device that guides women through pelvic floor exercises. The device is outfitted with several biofeedback sensors and pairs with most Android or Apple smartphone devices, via Bluetooth. Users can see their activity in real-time and track their progress over time. Learn more [about PeriCoach](#) and [hear stories from real women](#) about how PeriCoach has improved their lives.

