

# Manual Pelvic Physical Therapy For Blocked Fallopian Tubes

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

### TREATING FALLOPIAN TUBE OCCLUSION WITH A MANUAL PELVIC PHYSICAL THERAPY

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**Objective:** To determine the efficacy of a non-invasive, manual soft-tissue physical therapy in opening completely blocked fallopian tubes in infertile women with confirmed bilateral occlusion and a history indicative of abdominopelvic adhesions.

**Design:** Retrospective analysis.

**Setting:** Clear Passage Therapies, Inc, clinic, Gainesville, Florida.

**Patients:** 28 infertile women (mean age=35.2) with diagnosed complete tubal occlusion (proximal, midtubal, distal, or combination). The patients were being treated for various types of abdominopelvic pain and dysfunction (eg, intercourse and/or pelvic pain, menstrual cramps, endometriosis pain).

**Intervention:** A 20-hour series of manual physical therapy treatments (mean duration=1 week) designed to address pain and restricted soft tissue mobility due to adhesions and micro-adhesions. The therapists accessed some of the deeper structures (such as the fallopian tubes) indirectly by manipulating the peritoneum, uterine and ovarian ligaments, and

neighboring structures.

**Main outcome measures:** (1) Unilateral or bilateral tubal patency confirmed by diagnostic test or natural intrauterine pregnancy; (2) natural intrauterine pregnancy rate achieved by patent patients within the 2-year follow-up period.

**Results:** Of the 28 patients, 17 (61%, 95% exact CI 41%-78%) demonstrated post-treatment unilateral or bilateral patency, as measured by hysterosalpingography or natural intrauterine pregnancy. The median interval between the last treatment date and patency confirmation was 1 month. Nine of the 17 (53%) patent patients reported a subsequent natural intrauterine pregnancy.

**Conclusion:** Since truly occluded tubes are not known to reopen spontaneously, the results suggest this non-invasive therapy might be considered as an adjunct to standard gynecological procedures in treating tubal occlusion. (*Altern Ther Health Med* 2008;14(1):18-23.)

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It is generally agreed that adhesions within the fallopian tubes are a major cause of infertility.<sup>1</sup> Pelvic adhesions may negatively impact the efficacy of in vitro fertilization (IVF) and other assisted reproductive techniques.<sup>2</sup> Many gynecologists concur that when the occlusion is caused by pathology (vs spasms), the tubes rarely, if ever, spontaneously reopen. Although some contend that diagnostic hysterosalpingograms (HSGs) may themselves enhance fertility, others proclaim this a myth, and the debate continues.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, despite the variety of surgical procedures to correct tubal adhesions, the optimal treatment of infertility due to tubal occlusion has not been established.<sup>4</sup>

Tubal adhesions are most often caused by previous abdominopelvic surgery, endometriosis, infection, polyps, ectopic pregnancy, and chronic inflammation.<sup>5,6</sup> At 1 to 2 months post-injury, collagen fibrils organize into discrete bundles that eventually mature into a fibrous band. Collagen cross-links may evolve from microadhesions to adhesions to scars. Ironically, the adhesions formed as a byproduct of healing after surgical procedures to open blocked fallopian tubes may themselves be a cause of the high tubal reocclusion rates over time.<sup>7</sup>

The ability of manual therapy to effect structural change in adhesions is supported by the basic literature on mechanical tissue

Manual pelvic physical therapy for blocked fallopian tubes is an emerging approach that can provide relief and support for women experiencing fertility challenges. Blocked fallopian tubes can significantly impact a woman's ability to conceive, as these tubes play a crucial role in transporting eggs from the ovaries to the uterus and allowing sperm to meet the egg. Understanding the causes of tube blockages and how manual pelvic physical therapy can help may provide new hope for those facing infertility.

# Understanding Blocked Fallopian Tubes

Blocked fallopian tubes can result from various factors, including infections, endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), previous surgeries, or adhesions (scar tissue). This blockage can prevent the sperm from reaching the egg or hinder the fertilized egg from entering the uterus. Here are some common causes of blocked fallopian tubes:

- Infections: Conditions like PID can lead to scarring and blockages.
- Endometriosis: This condition can cause tissue to grow outside the uterus, potentially leading to blockages.
- Previous Surgeries: Surgeries in the pelvic area can create scar tissue that obstructs the tubes.
- Congenital Issues: Some women may be born with structural abnormalities.

The symptoms of blocked fallopian tubes may not be apparent, as many women do not experience noticeable signs. Commonly, infertility is the primary indication, which may prompt further investigation.

## Role of Manual Pelvic Physical Therapy

Manual pelvic physical therapy is a specialized form of physical therapy focused on the pelvic region. It aims to address musculoskeletal issues, improve pelvic floor function, and enhance overall reproductive health. This therapy can be beneficial for women with blocked fallopian tubes by:

- Reducing Scar Tissue: Manual therapy can help break down adhesions and scar tissue that may contribute to blockages.
- Improving Blood Flow: Enhanced circulation to the pelvic area can promote healing and improve overall function.
- Relieving Tension: Reducing tension in the pelvic floor can alleviate discomfort and promote relaxation.
- Enhancing Mobility: Manual techniques can improve the range of motion in the pelvic region, which may aid in function.

## How Manual Pelvic Physical Therapy Works

Manual pelvic physical therapy involves a variety of techniques and approaches tailored to the individual's needs. The therapy typically includes:

1. Assessment: The therapist begins with a comprehensive assessment, which may include a medical history review, physical examination, and discussion of symptoms.
2. Techniques: Various techniques may be employed, including:
  - Myofascial Release: Gentle stretching and pressure applied to the fascia to release tension and improve mobility.

- **Joint Mobilization:** Techniques aimed at improving the movement of pelvic joints.
- **Trigger Point Therapy:** Focusing on specific tight areas within the muscles to relieve pain and tension.
- **Visceral Manipulation:** A specialized technique that involves gentle manipulation of the organs to reduce restrictions and improve function.

3. **Home Exercises:** Patients may be given specific exercises to perform at home to enhance the benefits of therapy and promote ongoing pelvic health.

## **Benefits of Manual Pelvic Physical Therapy**

Manual pelvic physical therapy offers several potential benefits for women dealing with blocked fallopian tubes:

- **Enhanced Fertility:** By addressing underlying issues related to pelvic health, women may experience improved fertility outcomes.
- **Pain Relief:** Many women report decreased pelvic pain and discomfort following therapy.
- **Improved Function:** Therapy can enhance overall pelvic function and improve quality of life.
- **Holistic Approach:** This therapy promotes a holistic perspective on reproductive health, considering both physical and emotional aspects.

## **Who Can Benefit From Manual Pelvic Physical Therapy?**

Women experiencing a variety of conditions may benefit from manual pelvic physical therapy, including:

- Those with diagnosed blocked fallopian tubes.
- Women with a history of endometriosis or pelvic inflammatory disease.
- Individuals recovering from pelvic surgery.
- Women experiencing unexplained infertility or chronic pelvic pain.

## **Complementary Treatments**

Manual pelvic physical therapy can be part of a comprehensive fertility treatment plan. Here are some complementary treatments that may enhance its effectiveness:

- **Acupuncture:** This traditional Chinese medicine technique can promote relaxation, improve circulation, and support reproductive health.
- **Nutritional Counseling:** A balanced diet tailored to support fertility can be beneficial.
- **Stress Management:** Techniques such as yoga, meditation, or counseling can help manage stress, which is

important for overall reproductive health.

- **Medical Interventions:** In some cases, medical treatments like laparoscopic surgery or fertility medications may be necessary to address underlying conditions.

## **Finding a Qualified Therapist**

When seeking manual pelvic physical therapy, it is essential to find a qualified professional. Here are some tips for selecting the right therapist:

1. **Credentials:** Look for a licensed physical therapist with specialized training in pelvic health.
2. **Experience:** Choose a therapist experienced in treating conditions related to fertility and reproductive health.
3. **Referrals:** Ask for recommendations from healthcare providers or friends who have undergone similar treatments.
4. **Consultation:** Schedule a consultation to discuss your specific needs and assess the therapist's approach to care.

## **Potential Risks and Considerations**

While manual pelvic physical therapy is generally considered safe, it is crucial to recognize potential risks and considerations:

- **Discomfort:** Some techniques may cause temporary discomfort or soreness, but this should resolve quickly.
- **Contraindications:** Certain medical conditions may contraindicate manual therapy; it is vital to disclose your full medical history to the therapist.
- **Expectations:** While many women experience benefits, results can vary, and it is essential to have realistic expectations regarding therapy outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

Manual pelvic physical therapy for blocked fallopian tubes represents a holistic approach to addressing fertility challenges. By improving pelvic health, reducing scar tissue, and enhancing overall function, this therapy can potentially offer significant benefits for women struggling with infertility. When combined with complementary treatments and a comprehensive care plan, manual pelvic physical therapy may enhance the chances of conception and improve the quality of life for many women. Always consult with healthcare providers to determine the best course of action tailored to individual needs and conditions.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is manual pelvic physical therapy?**

Manual pelvic physical therapy is a specialized form of physical therapy that focuses on the pelvic region, utilizing hands-on techniques to alleviate pain, improve function, and enhance overall pelvic health.

## **How can manual pelvic physical therapy help with blocked fallopian tubes?**

While manual pelvic physical therapy cannot directly unblock fallopian tubes, it may help improve pelvic alignment, reduce adhesions, and enhance blood flow, potentially supporting the body's natural healing processes.

## **Is manual pelvic physical therapy safe for those with fertility issues?**

Yes, manual pelvic physical therapy is generally considered safe for individuals facing fertility issues, but it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new treatment.

## **What techniques are commonly used in manual pelvic physical therapy?**

Common techniques include myofascial release, visceral manipulation, and soft tissue mobilization, all aimed at relieving tension and improving the function of pelvic structures.

## **How many sessions of manual pelvic physical therapy are typically needed?**

The number of sessions can vary widely, but many individuals may benefit from 6-12 sessions, depending on their specific condition and treatment goals.

## **Can manual pelvic physical therapy be combined with other fertility treatments?**

Yes, manual pelvic physical therapy can complement other fertility treatments, such as IVF or hormonal therapies, by addressing pelvic floor dysfunction and enhancing overall well-being.

## **What should I expect during a manual pelvic physical therapy session?**

During a session, a trained therapist will evaluate your pelvic region and may perform hands-on techniques while discussing your symptoms and goals, ensuring a comfortable experience.

## Are there any risks or side effects associated with manual pelvic physical therapy?

While generally safe, some may experience mild discomfort or soreness after a session. It's crucial to communicate any concerns with your therapist to tailor the approach to your needs.

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