

Pelvic Floor Exercises

Pelvic floor exercises (“Kegel exercises”) are done to tone and strengthen the pubococcygeal muscle. This muscle helps support the urethra, bladder, vagina, and rectum. Pelvic floor exercises may be helpful in preventing or reducing the problem of stress urinary incontinence. The exercises can also enhance sexual pleasure.

The muscle you want to condition is the same one you contract when you hold back the flow of urine. If you are not sure, your health care provider can identify it for you during a pelvic examination.

Squeeze the muscle, contracting “upwards” until you are holding the rectal, vaginal, and urethral areas tightly. The abdominal and buttock muscles stay relaxed. Hold this contraction for 2-3 seconds, gradually increasing to 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

Your goal is to work up to 2 sets of 10 contractions per day. Strengthening the pelvic floor requires motivation and perseverance on your part. You may find it helpful to keep a diary or calendar of exercises accomplished on a daily basis. Continue these exercises for at least two months to see results. It is important to continue exercises long term.