

Kegel Exercises

What Are Kegel Exercises?

Kegel exercises are simple exercises that you can do to strengthen your perineal muscles. These are the muscles in the area around the vagina and urinary opening that help to support the uterus (womb), bladder, and rectum.

Why Are These Exercises Important?

The perineal muscles can become weakened by:

- childbirth
- decreased estrogen levels during and following menopause
- increased pressure on the muscles, such as during running and coughing

When the perineal muscles are weakened, you may notice any of the following problems:

- an uncomfortable feeling of pressure or heaviness
- leaking of urine when laughing, coughing, running, or doing exercise
- bulging of the bladder into the vagina (cystocele)
- bulging of the rectum into the vagina (rectocele)
- dropping of the uterus into the vagina

How To Do Kegel Exercises

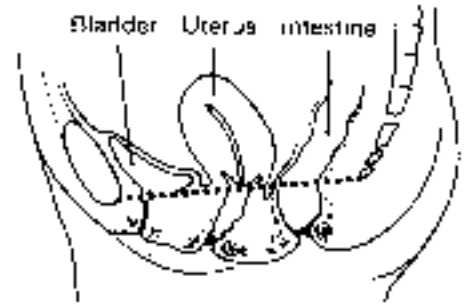
You can find the perineal muscle by trying to stop and restart the flow of urination. If you can do this, you can control and strengthen your perineal muscle.

Exercise 1 Tighten the muscle, hold it tight for two to three seconds, then relax.

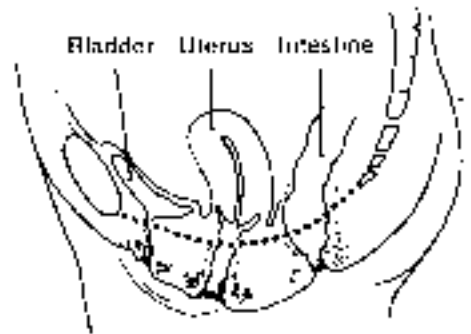
Exercise 2 Tighten the muscle and release five times as quickly as you can.

Try to do each exercise 100 times each day.

Good pelvic floor support with a firm base, organs in place



Inadequate support and the hammock sags, contents descend



Kegel exercises can be done anywhere at any time. Nobody can see you doing the exercises. You can exercise while watching TV, driving a car, doing housework, lying in bed, or while you're at work.

Developing a routine helps you to become more consistent, e.g., do the exercises during every stop light, during commercials on TV, after using the bathroom, etc.

While these exercises may seem difficult or tiring at first, with practice, the muscles will get stronger.

- Try to tighten the muscles a little more strongly each day.
- Keep the muscles of the abdomen, thighs and hips relaxed.
- Do not skip a day.
- If continuous exercise causes fatigue, try exercising for one or two minutes, then rest for several minutes before continuing.