

How to do Pelvic Floor Exercises: For Women

What will my treatment involve?

During your treatment session a physiotherapist will discuss your individual problems in detail and how your symptoms affect you. As part of your treatment you may be offered an examination of your pelvic floor muscles. Your physiotherapist will discuss this with you.

How long will I attend Physiotherapy for?

The length of Physiotherapy treatment will depend on your symptoms, the way your body responds and your compliance with what you are taught. Many people will practice their exercises at home and at work and only return for occasional check-ups. It can take 3 months or longer to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. Clinical trials have shown that people who were motivated, practice their exercises regularly and adhered to advice were more successful in achieving their goals.

I have tried these exercises before – why do I need to come?

Research tells us that without supervised instruction, people often perform the exercises incorrectly and do not continue with them on a regular basis. The long-term outcome has been proven to be much more successful following treatment with a specialist physiotherapist with 3 months of supervised training.

Is there other treatment available?

As there may be many reasons for your problems, all programmes provided by your physiotherapist will be tailored to your individual needs. If physiotherapy is not the answer for you, alternative options will be discussed with you.

Homework

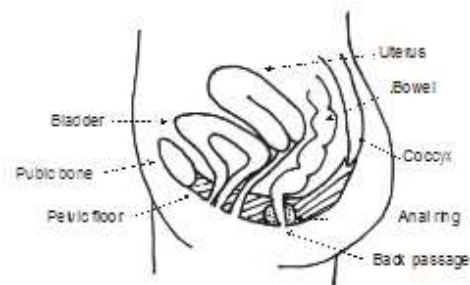
Pelvic Floor Exercises: 3-6 x a day Cue..... Long: Hold forseconds relax.....seconds..... repeat: Short.....	Ensure good fluid intake 1.5 - 2 litres	
The Knack – squeeze before you cough / sneeze / lift	Eliminate caffeine / fizzy drinks/ citrus / blackcurrant juice/ tomatoes / hot chocolate	
Ensure good bowel function – knees higher than hips (Stool under feet), good fibre, 5x fruit and veg. Do not strain	Deferment techniques - keep calm, stand still, cross legs, contract pelvic floor, press perineum, wait 10-20 secs until urge passes and walk on	
Bring fluid chart to next appointment	Pace activity – reduce lifting	
Posture	Monitor Weight	
Start cycling, swimming, walking	Start Pilates or Yoga	

What is the pelvic floor?

The pelvic floor is a large group of muscles that stretch from your tailbone (behind) and your pubic bone at the front, forming a bowl shape. They support your pelvic organs including your bladder, bowel and womb. They have a role in sexual function during intercourse. Your pelvic floor muscles provide extra support when you cough, sneeze or laugh to help prevent leakage from your bladder or bowel. When you pass urine or a bowel motion, your muscles should relax and then tighten again afterwards. This helps to prevent leakage and controls the passing of urine and bowel motions.

What causes pelvic floor weakness?

- Childbirth
- Previous Pelvic Surgery
- Chronic Cough
- Pelvic Trauma
- Menopausal Changes
- Repeat Heavy Lifting
- Being Overweight
- Constipation



Just like any other muscle in your body, it is important to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.

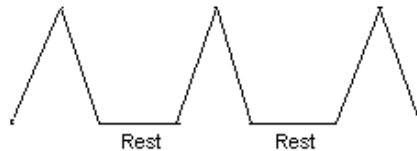
How to exercise your pelvic floor muscles

Sitting, standing or lying comfortably, slowly tighten the muscles around your anus and vagina, lifting up and in as if trying to stop yourself from passing wind and urine. Try to avoid tightening your buttocks, squeezing your legs or holding your breath. A feeling of gentle tightening in your lower stomach is normal. Try to complete exercises 1 and 2, 3-6 times a day.

- 1) To help build endurance in your muscles, contract your pelvic floor and squeeze for as long as you can, then relax and release fully for the same time you have held the squeeze. Repeat up to 10 times.



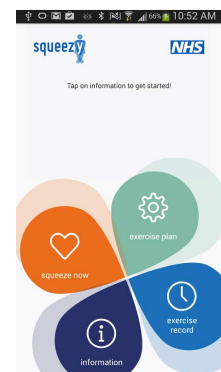
- 2) The muscles need to be able to work quickly and as strong as possible so that they can react to stresses such as coughing, sneezing or running. Imagine the muscles are an elevator. Lift up the muscles to the top floor as quickly as you can. Relax fully. Repeat up to 20 times



The most difficult part is remembering to do your exercises.

Try using a memory trigger such as exercising after you have emptied your bladder, using a sticky note to remind you, when you wash your hands or when clean your teeth.

You can also download the squeezy app on your phone (www.squeezyapp.co.uk)



Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.



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