

How to do Pelvic Floor Exercises

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy (telephone 01932 722547)

What is the pelvic floor?

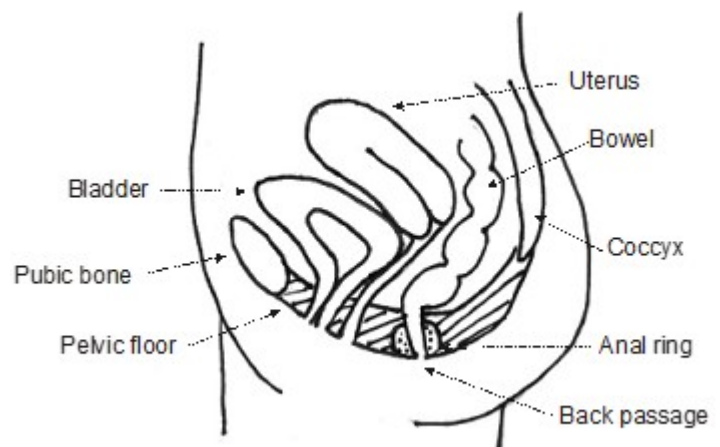
The pelvic floor is a large group of muscles that stretch from your tailbone (behind) and your pubic bone (front) forming a hammock shape. They support your pelvic organs including your womb, your bladder and bowel to maintain continence and have a role in sexual function during intercourse.

What are the signs of a weak pelvic floor?

- Stress incontinence (leaking urine during exercise or when coughing, sneezing, or lifting)
- Urgency (a sudden strong desire to pass urine)
- Prolapse (a heaviness/dragging sensation in the vagina).

What causes pelvic floor weakness?

- Childbirth
- Previous pelvic surgery or trauma
- Chronic cough
- Menopausal changes
- Repeated heavy lifting
- Being overweight
- Constipation



How to exercise your pelvic floor muscles

Just like any other muscle in your body, it is important to strengthen and maintain your pelvic floor muscle strength. There are two main ways to exercise your pelvic floor muscles: slow long holds and fast squeezes and both are equally as important to work on.

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 leg or tummy muscles, or holding your breath. A feeling of gentle tightening in your lower stomach is normal.

Try to complete exercises 3 times a day.

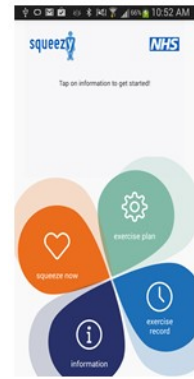
- **Slow holds:** These aim to improve the endurance of your pelvic floor muscles.

Contract your pelvic floor and hold for as long as you can, aiming for 10 seconds then relax and release fully for the same time you have held the squeeze. Repeat up to 10 times or as many as you are able to do.

- **Fast squeezes:** These aim to improve the quick reactions of your pelvic floor muscles to things like coughing, sneezing or running. Pull up and tighten your pelvic floor muscles as quickly as you can and then relax fully. Repeat up to 20 times

The most difficult part is remembering to do your exercises.

Try using a memory trigger such as using a sticky note to remind you, when you wash your hands or when you clean your teeth. You can also download the squeezy app on your phone (www.squeezyapp.co.uk)



Further Information

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