



How to do Kegel Exercises

Step 1.

Locate the muscles on your pelvic floor by contracting the muscles around your urethra as if you are trying to hold back the flow of urine. Then, try urinating when your bladder is not full, stopping and starting the flow of urine several times.

Gradually allow a smaller flow of urine to escape each time. Stopping the flow will tighten the pelvic floor, while releasing the flow will relax the pelvic floor. This will help you move to the next step.

Step 2.

Contract and release the pelvic floor muscles quickly and firmly. You can check yourself by placing a finger in your vagina and squeezing around it. When you feel pressure around your finger, you are using the correct muscles. Try to keep everything relaxed except the muscles around the vagina. At the same time, do not bear down or squeeze your thigh, back or abdominal muscles. You can do the exercises with your knees together (lying or sitting), starting with 2 five-minute sessions per day. You should squeeze the muscle for a count of four and relax for a count of four. At first, you may not be able to do the exercises for a whole five minutes or hold the squeeze for a count of four. With practice it will become easier as the muscles get stronger.

Step 3.

Modify the above routine (Step 2) by doing the exercises with your knees apart and squeezing to a count of eight and then relaxing to a count of eight. Repeat this for five minutes two times a day.

Step 4.

Do the elevator exercises by imagining your pelvic floor is an elevator. Contract the muscles upward from the first floor to the fifth floor, stopping at each floor and getting tighter as you go higher. Then, release downward, releasing tension as you go down. Get further control over your pelvic floor muscles by pushing them down "to the basement". Practice this with your bladder empty. Develop elasticity of the pelvic floor muscles by sitting on a low stool or chair with your knees apart. Lean

forward and rest your elbows on your knees. Begin by tensing the muscles around the urethra, then the vagina and back toward the rectum. Then release in the opposite direction.

Step 5.

Do daily Kegel practice sessions in which you firmly and quickly contract and release your pelvic floor muscles 10 times a session, five to 10 times daily. You can use an everyday activity such as stopping at red lights or diaper changes to remind you of the timing for your Kegel exercises.

How often?

You can do the exercises for five minutes three times a week. If you start having problems with urine loss, you may need to go back to five minutes two times a day.

Helpful Hints:

Breathe slowly and deeply; don't hold your breath. Be careful not to tighten your stomach, legs, or other muscles.

Tighten your pelvic muscles before sneezing, lifting or jumping. This can help prevent pelvic muscle damage.

Use an already regular daily activity (such as before breakfast, before bed, after lunch etc.) to help you remember to do your Kegel exercises. If you stop doing them, start again! Just remember it takes regular practice to see results.

If you have ongoing concerns with incontinence (urine leaking) or do not feel Kegel exercises are helping, you may wish to consider Pelvic Floor Physiotherapy. Several physiotherapists in the area offer this type of therapy. Please feel free to ask us for their contact information.