

Kegel Exercises

These pelvic muscle exercises often benefit both men and women with stress and urge incontinence. The exercises strengthen the pubococcygeus (PCG) muscle simply by tightening and relaxing it. A person can learn to identify these pelvic muscles by simply tensing the ring of muscles around the rectum while sitting or standing. The abdominal, thigh, and buttock muscles should remain relaxed. Stopping and starting the flow of urine while voiding is another good way to identify these muscles.

The Exercises

- **Quick Kegels**
Tighten and relax the PCG muscle as rapidly as possible.
- **Slow Kegels**
Tighten the PCG muscle, hold it for a count of 5, then relax.
- **Pull-In Kegels**
Pull up the entire pelvic floor as though trying to suck water. Hold for a count of 5 while breathing normally. Relax for a count of 5 and repeat.

At first, do 10 of each of the exercises (one set) four times every day. Each week increase the number of times of exercise by five (15, 20, 25, etc.). Complete 4 sets each day. Be patient, because it may take at least 3 months for results. Make the exercises a part of your daily life to help ensure ongoing benefits.

When you have control of these muscles, use them to help prevent “accidents.” Tighten your pelvic muscles when you have the urge to urinate, before you get up from a chair, before you move to get out of bed, before and while lifting heavy objects, when someone is going to tell you a funny story, or when you feel a sneeze or cough coming on.

After you have had an examination by your health care provider, you may be asked to do exercises to cure or improve urinary incontinence. Kegel exercises help strengthen the pelvic muscles, which in turn improves support for the bladder and the bladder sphincter muscles. Kegel exercise has been shown to be helpful for both men and women.

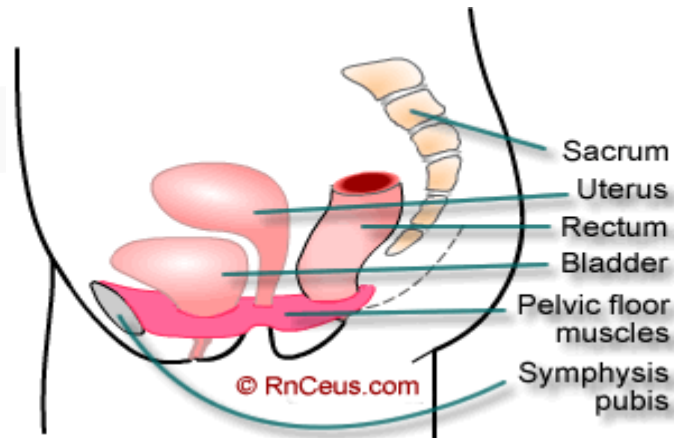
Here is how you do it:

1. Try to start and stop the flow of urine when you are on the toilet. Notice which muscles you are using. These are also the muscles you use to hold back “gas.”
2. After you have located these muscles, DO NOT exercise while urinating. Instead:
 - a. Contract them and hold tight for 3 seconds,
 - b. Then release for 3 seconds.

Start doing this exercise a few minutes twice a day. You may exercise standing up, sitting down, or lying down.

DO NOT tighten the abdominal, leg, or buttock muscles. Place your hand on these muscles to check for movement while you are performing Kegel exercises. If you can feel movement, then you are not using the correct muscles.

3. As you are able, increase the “hold” and the “relax” to 10 seconds each.
4. As you are able, increase the exercise time to 10 minutes twice a day.



Be patient. It may take up to 3 months to achieve significant results.