



Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises (Kegels)

Doing pelvic floor muscle exercises (Kegels) every day can improve or prevent uncomfortable vaginal symptoms, overactive bladder, and urine leaks (incontinence). Regular Kegels also help increase sexual intimacy sensations and pleasure. Pelvic floor muscles support your vagina, rectum, and urethra. Doctors recommend Kegels for all women, and men can benefit from these exercises, too.

After childbirth, Kegels help the pelvic floor muscles and nearby organs recover.

Learn to do Kegels

Start by learning to feel and activate your pelvic floor muscles.

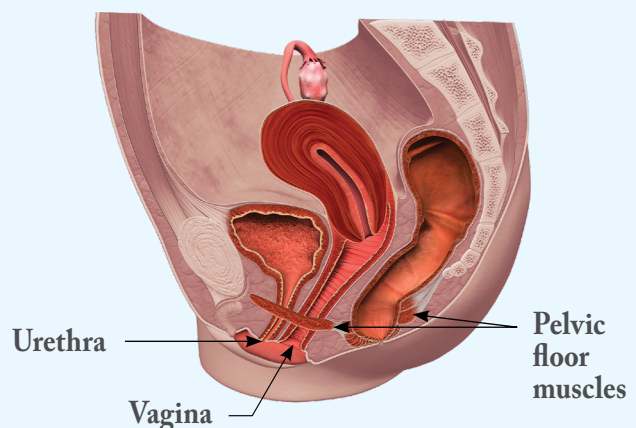
- Place a hand over your perineum (the skin between your vagina and anus) and feel your perineum lift up as you squeeze your pelvic floor muscles.
- Place a finger into your vagina and squeeze your pelvic floor muscles. Notice how this feels.

Doctors don't recommend doing Kegel exercises while on the toilet. It can make it difficult to empty your bladder.

Do sets of Kegels every day

- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles by pulling the muscles around your vagina and rectum up and in. Your lower belly muscles may also pull in a bit.

- Let your thighs, buttocks, and stomach stay relaxed. Make sure to keep your breathing relaxed, also.
- Hold the Kegel for 3 seconds while breathing easily and normally. Relax your muscles and take 1 or 2 breaths. Repeat this sequence 10 times, for 1 set.
- Work up to doing 3 sets per day, every day. Try doing sets lying down, sitting, and standing.



Kegels for urinary incontinence

Kegel exercises can help improve or prevent 2 main types of urine leakage (incontinence).

- **Stress incontinence.** This is caused by extra pressure on your bladder when you cough, laugh, sneeze, or during other strong physical activity.
- **Urge incontinence.** This is an overwhelming urge to urinate caused by sudden, unexpected bladder contractions.

Kegel exercises strengthen the muscles around the urethra that control urine flow. Urine flows from the bladder into the urethra, then out of your body. Kegels can signal the bladder to relax. If you feel a sudden urge to urinate, do Kegels to calm your bladder. This lets you to get to the bathroom in time.

Incontinence symptoms usually start to improve 2 to 3 weeks after starting Kegels. Many women improve in 6 to 8 weeks.

Doing Kegels every day prevents urinary problems from returning.

Kegel exercises are simple and effective. You can do them anywhere, any time. No one will know you're doing them, except you.

Contact us if you:

- Continue to have symptoms.
- Have problems doing Kegels.
- Have pain in your pelvis or pelvic floor muscles.