



Kegel Exercises

Purpose

The pelvic floor muscles provide support (like a hammock) for the bladder, uterus and rectum. Sometimes, poor muscle tone leads to a loss of function, i.e., urine leakage when coughing or sneezing. Kegel exercises strengthen the pelvic floor muscles to help reduce or eliminate leakage of urine.

To Begin

Determine which muscles are your Kegel muscles by attempting to stop the flow of urine for one to two seconds the next time you void. The muscles that you used to stop the flow of urine are the pelvic floor muscles. Once you locate these muscles, it is important **not** to practice the Kegel exercises while voiding because this may hinder complete emptying of your bladder.

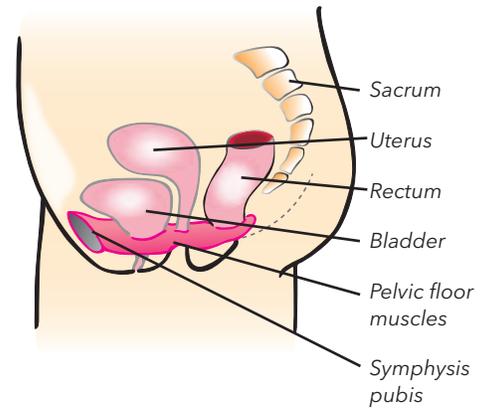
First Week

Practice quickly squeezing and relaxing these muscles 10 times. Perform these sets three times a day for the first week.

Second Week

Practice tightening these muscles, holding tight for a count of three seconds and then relaxing for a count of six seconds. Repeat this 10 times. Try to do this sequence three times a day; one sequence in the standing position, one sequence in the sitting position and one sequence in the lying position.

When beginning, pick a quiet time in your day to do these exercises, so that you can concentrate on them. Eventually, you can work them



into your daily activities, like when you are walking to the bathroom with a full bladder or when you are coughing, sneezing or laughing. Try to build up to five sets of 10 per day.

When you are practicing these exercises, no one but you should be able to tell you're doing them. Don't squeeze your stomach muscles, buttocks or thigh muscles at the same time; they should be relaxed ... and don't hold your breath!

You should do these exercises every day, and within two to four weeks you should begin to see improvements ... fewer urinary incontinence episodes.

For more information, call your healthcare provider.

To register for Birth and Family Education classes call **888-74-OBTLC** (888-746-2852).