

NORTHERN VIRGINIA PELVIC SURGERY ASSOCIATES

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How to do Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises

Millions of women experience some degree of urinary incontinence or involuntary urination. Many women with urinary incontinence can decrease their urinary leakage during coughing, laughing, sneezing, or other activities by exercising the muscles of the pelvic floor. These exercises are called “Kegel exercises”, after the doctor who first described them. Set aside some time in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Sit comfortably upright and relax. Although this is an important exercise, there is no need to strain.

Before doing Kegel exercises, it is necessary to identify the pelvic floor muscle. Your doctor can help you identify the correct muscles to contract during a pelvic exam. To help you identify the muscles at home, place your finger inside your vagina. Squeeze around your finger. That’s the muscle you want to exercise. Once you have isolated that muscle several times, there is no need to place your finger in the vagina to do the exercises.

1. SQUEEZE AND HOLD FOR 10 SECONDS

Then relax 10 seconds. Remember it is as important to relax as it is to squeeze this muscle. Initially you may not be able to hold the squeeze for 10 seconds. Don’t get discouraged.

2. WHEN TO DO THIS EXERCISE

10-15 times in the morning
10-15 times in the afternoon
10-15 times in the evening

3. THINGS TO REMEMBER

- a. Never use your stomach, legs, or buttock muscles. Place your hand on your abdomen while you are squeezing your pelvic floor muscle. If you feel your abdomen move or your buttocks lift upwards, then you are also using additional muscles, not just the pelvic muscles.
- b. Build strength slowly, don’t expect results right away. You may notice some soreness in the pelvic muscles and around the vaginal opening once you start exercising regularly. If

the soreness becomes too uncomfortable, take a 1-2 day break from the exercises to allow the muscle to rest.

- c. The great thing about this exercise is that after you become familiar with it, it can be done anywhere. No one can see you exercising this internal muscle.
- d. To maximally benefit from the exercises and prevent urine loss with activities, you must strengthen the muscle and use the muscle during stressful activity. For example, as you feel the urge to cough, contract the pelvic muscles to prevent leakage while you cough.

4. WHEN WILL YOU SEE A CHANGE

After about 6-8 weeks of doing this exercise you should notice an improvement in urinary loss. Remember, the benefits of these exercises will continue only as long as you do them. Use it, or lose it!