

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS
ABOUT
PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE EXERCISES FOR MEN

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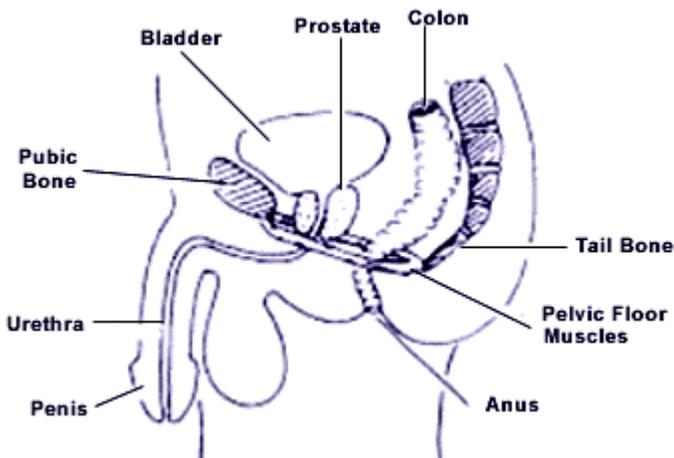
Introduction: Many men experience problems with their urinary system, leading to unwanted leakage of urine. Some also have difficulty controlling wind or leakage from the bowels. Often this is due to a weakness of the muscles of the pelvic floor, which play an important role in preventing these troublesome conditions.

What are the pelvic floor muscles?

The pelvic floor forms a sling of muscles, which are attached to the pubic bone at the front of the pelvis and the tailbone (coccyx), at the back. A man's pelvic floor supports the bladder and bowel. The pelvic floor muscles play an important role in bladder and bowel control and have a role in maintaining sexual function.

Why the pelvic floor muscle get weak.

- Surgery for an enlarged prostate
- Constipation - repeated straining to empty the bowels
- Persistent heavy lifting
- Chronic cough
- Being overweight
- Lack of general fitness



Learning to do a pelvic floor muscle exercise

1. Sit on a firm chair with your knees slightly apart,

TIGHTEN the ring of muscle around your back passage (anus) as though preventing a bowel movement or wind escaping.

LIFT the muscles up inside, **HOLD**, then... **RELAX** slowly.

2. In the same position, imagine you have to stop yourself passing urine.

TIGHTEN the muscles around your front. You should feel a slight lift of the scrotum as the base of your penis moves towards your abdomen.

LIFT them up inside, **HOLD**, then...**RELAX** slowly.

3. In the same position, put the two together.

Tighten the muscles around your back passage and front passage. **TOGETHER**, **LIFT** them up inside you; **HOLD** then...**RELAX** slowly.

You may feel your lower tummy draw in as you pull in your pelvic floor, this is due to the fact that the muscle work together. However it is important to keep your buttocks, and thighs relaxed and to breathe normally.

The pelvic floor muscles have two types of muscle fibres in them. It's important to exercise both.

- **Slow twitch muscle fibres**, which have constant tone in them (even when you are asleep!). They support your bladder and bowel and help you to hold on when you can't get to the toilet immediately

- **Fast twitch muscle fibres**, which contract strongly and quickly to prevent leakage of urine when there is extra pressure on the bladder e.g., when you cough, sneeze, laugh or lift something heavy.

Exercise Programme

TIGHTEN your pelvic floor muscle as described:

Slow contractions: Hold for as many seconds as you can (up to a maximum of 10 seconds).

How long could you **HOLD** the contraction for? seconds

RELAX the contraction and **REST** for 4 seconds.

How many times could you repeat the contraction? repetitions (up to a maximum of 10)

Fast contractions: How many quick contractions can you do?
 Aim to increase this number (up to a maximum of 10)

It is important to do these exercises **at least 3 times a day**, gradually building up the amount of each exercise that you can do. It can take between 3-6 months to develop enough strength in the muscles to reduce your symptoms.

These exercises may be used on their own or in conjunction with other strategies such as bladder training to improve control of urgency and frequency. If you would like further information or speak to your GP or specialist physiotherapist or continence nurse.

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