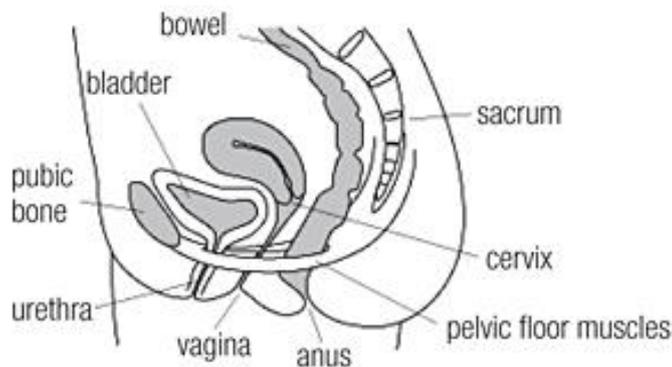


Pelvic Floor Exercises for Women

What are the PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES?

The pelvic floor forms a sling of muscles that are attached to the pubic bone at the front of the pelvis and the tailbone (coccyx) at the back. They have three openings, one at the front from the bladder (urethra), one in the middle from the birth canal (vagina) and one at the back from the bowel (rectum).



What do the Pelvic Floor Muscles do?

The pelvic floor muscles have two types of muscle fibres in them:

1. **Slow twitch muscle fibres**, which have constant tone in them (even when you are asleep!). They support your pelvic organs up inside you and work to keep water (urine) inside your bladder until you find a suitable place to pass it.
2. **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.

Learning to do the Pelvic Floor Exercises

Sit on a firm chair or stool with your knees slightly apart in good posture:

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.

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

TIGHTEN the muscles around your front passages, **LIFT** them up inside, **HOLD**, then...**RELAX** slowly.

Now you are ready to try *The Basic Pelvic Floor Exercise*.

Basic Pelvic Floor Exercise

In the same position,

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

Repeat several times remembering to keep your tummy, buttocks and thigh muscles relaxed. Breathe normally throughout.

The Exercise Programme

First determine your “starting block”.

1. **TIGHTEN** your pelvic floor muscles as described in The Basic Pelvic Floor Exercise.
2. **HOLD** for as many seconds as you can (*up to a maximum of 10 seconds*).
3. **RELAX** the contraction and **REST** for 4 seconds.

How long could you **HOLD** the contraction for?
How many times could you repeat the contraction?

seconds

times

So, your “starting block” becomes

e.g. seconds repetitions

Now quickly tighten your pelvic floor muscles and then relax the muscle completely. How many quick contractions can you do? Aim to increase this number (*up to a maximum of 10*).

Repeat both these exercises between 3 – 6 times a day. As a result of this muscle training your pelvic floor will get stronger and your “starting block” will change.

The pelvic floor muscles work with your lower abdominal muscles. Therefore as you draw up your pelvic floor muscles, you should feel your lower abdomen draw in slightly.

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