

Kegel Exercises

To strengthen pelvic floor muscles and restore bladder control

Pelvic Floor Muscles and Bladder Control

Your pelvic floor muscles are several layers of muscles between your legs at the bottom of your pelvic area. These muscles hold your bladder and other organs in place and control your urine flow.

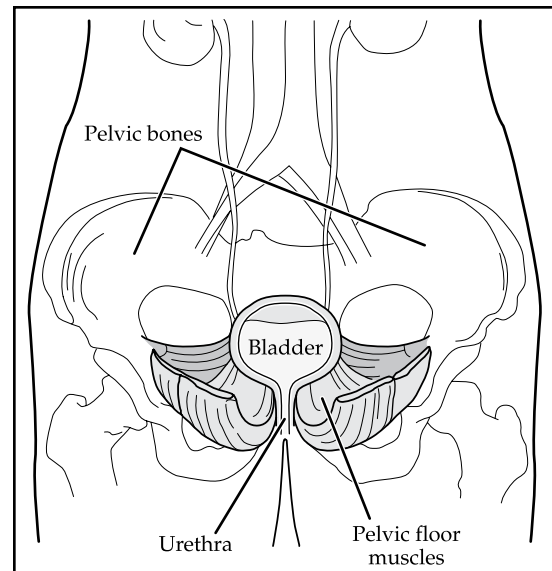
Pelvic floor muscles may weaken over time and cause urine to leak. There are a number of things that can cause weak pelvic muscles: pregnancy, childbirth and being overweight.

Kegel exercises, which are pelvic muscle exercises, can help you strengthen your pelvic floor muscles and regain bladder control.

Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises take just a few minutes a day, but they can improve your bladder control within 3 to 6 weeks. Your health care provider or physical therapist can help you learn how to do the exercises the right way.

- **Find the right muscles to exercise.** To locate the muscles you need to strengthen for better bladder control, do the following:
 - When you urinate, squeeze to stop the flow of urine. The muscles you squeeze are the ones you will exercise.
 - Pretend you are trying to stop passing gas. The muscles you use are the ones you will exercise.



© Allina Health System

Your pelvic floor muscles hold your bladder and other organs in place.

- **Do Kegels every day.** Your health care provider will give you a schedule for doing Kegel exercises. They may recommend the following:
 - Do the exercises at least three times a day. To start, squeeze your pelvic floor muscles and hold for a count of 3. Then relax for a count of 3. Work your way up to 10 to 15 repeats each time you exercise.
 - You can do the exercises in any position (lying down, sitting or standing). You can do them anywhere and anytime.

(over)

- Don't squeeze other muscles at the same time. Avoid tightening your stomach, leg or buttock muscles. Those muscles can put more pressure on your bladder control muscles.
- Train yourself to tighten your pelvic muscles before you sneeze, lift or jump.

There are exercise aids available to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. Your health care provider may talk with you about special weights or biofeedback.

Information adapted from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).