



## Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises (Kegel Exercises)


*Information for Patients*

The muscles of the pelvic floor support all the structures within the pelvis and abdomen. They help control the bladder and bowel. They can be weakened by age, neurological problems, childbirth and surgery. Like any muscle, they can be strengthened with exercise such that urinary incontinence can be improved.

Who should do them?

1. Issues with control of bladder or bowel. Incontinence, urgency or frequency
2. Pelvic prolapse in females
3. Start 3 months after radical prostatectomy. Tighten the muscles before coughing, sneezing or heavy lifting.

	<b>STEP 1: FIND THE RIGHT MUSCLES</b>						
	Make sure you are exercising the right thing.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Squeeze the same muscles you would use to cut off your urinary stream or prevent passing gas (though you DON'T want to stop the stream when doing the exercises).</li> <li>• 'Puff' or 'lift up' the chest and relax the stomach muscles.</li> <li>• Women can try to 'squeeze' 1-2 fingers placed in the vagina.</li> <li>• If you are doing it correctly you will feel your genitals "drawing up and in".</li> </ul>						
	<b>STEP 2: PERFECT YOUR TECHNIQUE &amp; REPEAT USING THE "3-3-3-10-10-10" PROGRAM</b>						
	Building strength takes time – be patient and control will improve.						
	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><b>3 REPEATS</b> of each set</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><b>3 TIMES</b> per day for</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><b>3 MONTHS</b> minimum</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>10 SETS</b> of contractions</td> <td><b>10 SECONDS</b> holding*</td> <td><b>10 SECONDS</b> relaxing*</td> </tr> </table>	<b>3 REPEATS</b> of each set	<b>3 TIMES</b> per day for	<b>3 MONTHS</b> minimum	<b>10 SETS</b> of contractions	<b>10 SECONDS</b> holding*	<b>10 SECONDS</b> relaxing*
<b>3 REPEATS</b> of each set	<b>3 TIMES</b> per day for	<b>3 MONTHS</b> minimum					
<b>10 SETS</b> of contractions	<b>10 SECONDS</b> holding*	<b>10 SECONDS</b> relaxing*					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do them before BREAKFAST – LUNCH – DINNER to work into your routine.</li> <li>• Tighten only pelvic floor muscles. Do not use abdominal, buttock or inner thigh muscles.</li> <li>• Breathe during the contractions.</li> <li>• Choose a comfortable place and quiet time of day to perform these eg. in bed, watching TV</li> <li>• * you may only be able hold for 2-3 seconds when you start – work your way up</li> </ul>						

	<b>COMMON PITFALLS</b>
	Like any exercise, results won't occur immediately
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't perform the exercises by routinely trying to stop your stream – only do this to identify the right muscle when you start the exercises.</li> <li>• Don't hold your breath and bear down – this uses the abdominal, buttocks and leg muscles which are <i>not</i> the ones you want. This strains the pelvic floor and pushes 'out and down' instead of drawing 'up and in'.</li> <li>• You must be diligent and keep up with the exercises. Results take time.</li> </ul>

If you are having problems localizing the right muscles, a physiotherapist or nurse continence advisor can help - ask us about the Richmond Urological Care Centre. Soul Physio, Treloar Physio and Dayan Physio.