

# Pelvic floor exercises for women



## Information for patients Sex and Relationship Therapy

### What are pelvic floor muscles?

The pelvic floor muscles are a group of muscles that form a sling at the base of your pelvis, running from the pubic bone at the front to the coccyx (tail bone) at the back. There are three orifices in the female pelvic floor for the urethra (where urine comes out), the vagina and the anus. The muscles support the contents of the pelvis and abdomen, help control emptying of the bladder and bowel and tighten during sexual activity. They normally adjust automatically to become tighter or more relaxed, e.g. they tighten when you lift something and relax when you empty your bladder.

### How will strengthening the pelvic floor help?

Strengthening the pelvic floor muscles can benefit your sexual arousal and orgasmic experience. Exercises can strengthen the pelvic floor muscles and improve blood circulation in the pelvis. This means they can be helpful to improve the swelling and lubrication of the genital area during arousal, increase pelvic sensitivity and increase the strength and pleasure of orgasms.

### Exercises

These exercises can be done “any time, any place” and only require a few minutes each day.

1. First you need to locate the correct muscles. The next time you urinate, stop and start the flow several times – the muscles you use to do this are your pelvic floor muscles. You can also feel these contractions by inserting a finger or two into the vagina and squeezing the muscles – you should feel a tightening at the entrance to the vagina.
  2. Once you know which are your pelvic floor muscles, squeeze and release them 15 times. You do not need to hold the contraction at this stage – just squeeze fully, then let go.
  3. Repeat this twice a day.
- Make sure you are just contracting your pelvic floor muscles, and not your stomach, buttocks or thighs.
  - Think about how you can incorporate these twice daily exercises into your routine; perhaps you could do them when you clean your teeth, wash up, travel to and from work, etc.
  - Once you can comfortably manage 15, gradually increase the number each day until you are doing 70, twice a day.

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Once you can do 70 basic contractions twice a day, introduce the following variations:

- **Fast contractions** – try to do some fast squeezes, but make sure you still fully contract and fully relax each time.
- **Slow contractions** – slowly contract the muscles to the count of three, hold for three, and then gradually relax to the count of three.
- **Holds** – fully contract the pelvic floor muscles and hold for as long as possible, counting the number of seconds. Gradually increase the time you can hold the full contraction for, up to a maximum of 10 seconds.

## How should I use my pelvic floor muscles during intercourse?

You can incorporate pelvic floor contractions into love-making by tightening the muscles to help trigger an orgasm. If you are engaging in penile-vaginal intercourse, you can squeeze the muscles around the penis to increase sensations for you and your partner.



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