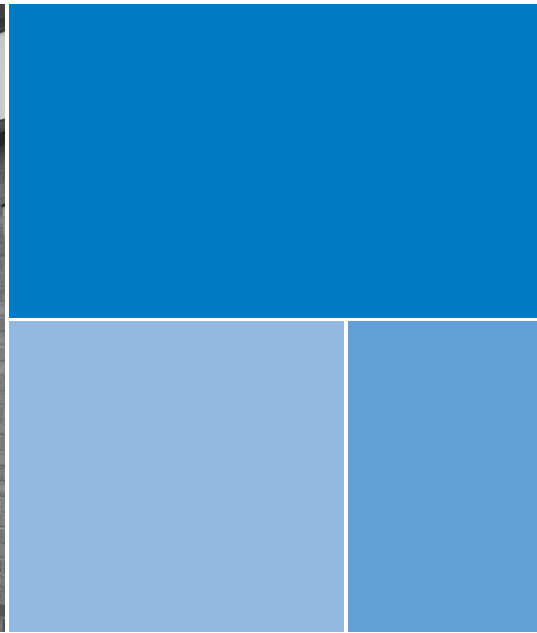


Women and Men's Health Physiotherapy Pelvic floor exercises for men



[Patient Information](#)

Pelvic floor exercises for men

Your pelvic floor muscles help to control your bladder and bowel by tightly closing the urethra and back passage (anus). They're also important for sexual function.

The most common reason men are advised to do pelvic floor muscle exercises is to reduce urinary leakage (incontinence) after prostate surgery. Whilst the chance of you having a prostate problem increases as you get older, young men can have problems with their pelvic floor muscles too. This isn't always linked to having weak pelvic floor muscles – it may be that you're just not working the muscles in the right way or at the right time or you may have overactive pelvic floor muscles. The advice in this leaflet will be adapted for you by your physiotherapist, usually following an examination.

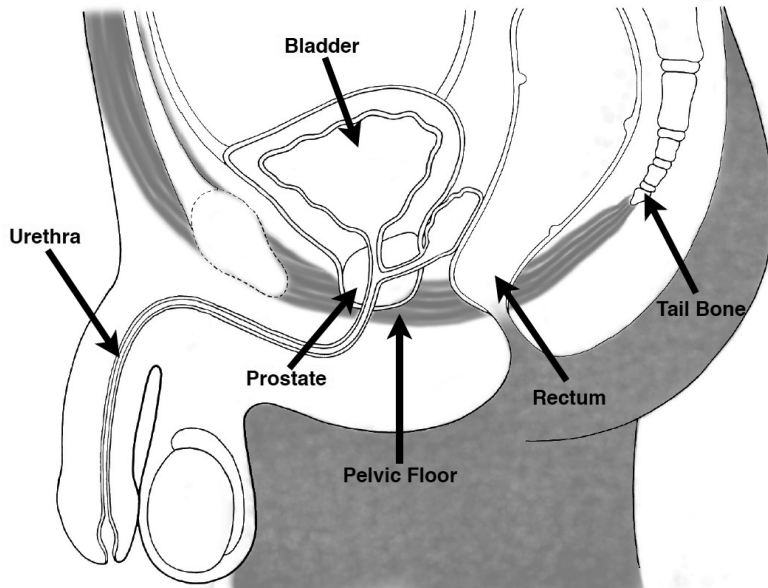
Other problems that can be helped by pelvic floor muscle exercises include:

- 'after-dribble' (leakage soon after you've been to the toilet)
- achieving or maintaining an erection
- premature ejaculation
- bowel leakage.

Where are my pelvic floor muscles?

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles which form the base, or floor, of the pelvis. There is an extra ring of muscle around the back passage (the anal sphincter) which is mainly involved with bowel control. The anal sphincter is connected to the back part of the pelvic floor muscles and should work with it.

Lots of men have heard about pelvic floor muscle exercises but they usually know about it as an exercise that women are advised to do after having a baby. They are often surprised to find out that they also have a pelvic floor and that they need to work these muscles.



How do I exercise my pelvic floor muscles?

It's important to make sure that you're doing these exercises in the right way. If you've had a pelvic floor examination your physiotherapist will have checked your technique and given you advice on whether you need to focus on contracting the muscles or relaxing them. Whenever you do your exercises you should try to concentrate on them – don't get distracted by other things. This helps you to work the muscles in the best way possible – with the pelvic floor it's often quality, not quantity, that's important.

First tighten (squeeze) the muscles around the back passage, as if you're trying to stop yourself passing wind. Whilst you hold this squeeze tighten the front part of the muscle as if you're trying to stop yourself passing urine. It should feel like a 'squeeze and lift' inside. If you do the exercises correctly you should see the base of your penis dip down (pull back) and your scrotum lift up. Some men find it helps to think about lifting your 'nuts to your guts'!

Try to breathe in and out normally whilst you do your exercises. You may feel your lower tummy muscles working at the same time, but your buttocks and thigh muscles should stay relaxed. Make sure you fully relax the pelvic floor muscles after each squeeze. If you need to work more on relaxing the muscles your physiotherapist will give you extra advice on how to do this.

You should be able to do these exercises in any position and it's good to work the muscles in different ways. This includes doing both long holds and short squeezes.

Long holds: Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles and hold for several seconds. Count how long you can hold and then relax. Repeat this long hold until you feel that the muscles are tired. Count how many times you are able to repeat this exercise.

Short squeezes: squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles and then relax. Repeat until you feel that the muscles are tired. Count how many times you are able to repeat this exercise.

Your physiotherapist may also check and advise you on doing the same exercise but with a more gentle squeeze (about 50% of your maximum squeeze) which you hold for longer. We call this a 'sub-maximal' squeeze. You can try to hold this sub-maximal squeeze whilst walking to encourage the muscles to work during activity, although you may find this hard to do.

If you have 'after dribble' try doing a strong squeeze and lift of your pelvic floor muscles after your urine flow has stopped. This may help to empty the small amount of urine that would otherwise be left in your urethra. This is the dribble that leaks out later.

If you leak with particular activities try to squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles before you do that activity. If your muscles are working well this may be enough to stop the leak. It's a technique that is often called 'the knack'.

What exercise programme is right for me?

After your physiotherapist has assessed you they will give you a personalised exercise programme. This will usually include a mix of long holds, short squeezes and sub-maximal holds.

Long holds: practice holding your 'squeeze and lift' for ____ seconds. Relax completely. Repeat this long hold ____ times.

Short squeezes: practice ____ short squeezes.

Sub-maximal holds: practice holding your gentle contraction (about 50% of your maximum squeeze) for up to ____ seconds. Repeat this ____ times.

Also try to 'squeeze and lift' your pelvic floor muscles before you do any activity that may cause leakage.

If your exercise programme needs to be more personalised your physiotherapist will provide more information at the end of this leaflet.

What improvement should I aim for?

You may find that you can gradually increase your home exercise programme. Remember that it's quality, not quantity, that's important, but as your muscles improve you could try to hold your long squeezes for one second longer or do one more squeeze.

Another way of improving is to do the sub-maximal holds whilst you are more active, for example walking quicker or going up stairs.

Remembering to exercise

Try to make your pelvic floor exercise programme part of your daily routine. This can be hard to start with so here are some tips to help you remember:

- set an alarm (maybe the one on your mobile phone)
- use a pelvic floor App on your smartphone ('Squeezy for Men' is approved by the NHS, designed for men and can be set for your personalised exercise programme)
- use reminder notes at home or work
- do them after a specific activity.

How do I contact my physiotherapist?

Your physiotherapist is _____

You can leave a message for them with our receptionist on 01493 452378. If your call gets diverted to voicemail please leave a message and one of the team will get back to you as soon as possible.

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

Courtesy and respect

- A welcoming and positive attitude
- Polite, friendly and interested in people
- Value and respect people as individuals
So people feel **welcome**

Attentively kind and helpful

- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
- Attentive, responsive & take time to help
- Visible presence of staff to provide care
So people feel **cared for**

Responsive communication

- Listen to people & answer their questions
- Keep people clearly informed
- Involve people
So people feel in **control**

Effective and professional

- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
- Effective care / services from joined up teams
- Organised and timely, looking to improve
So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240

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