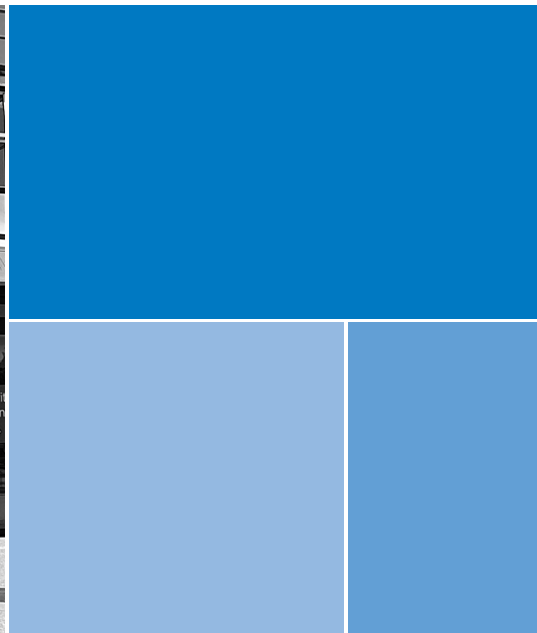




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NHS Foundation Trust

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Pelvic Floor Exercises for Men



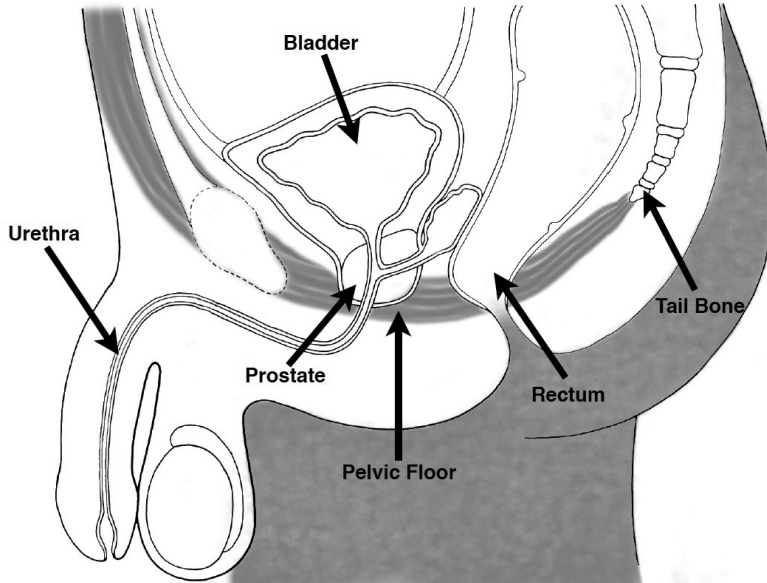
Patient Information

Your pelvic floor muscles

At the base of the pelvis is a layer of muscles called the pelvic floor. The pelvic floor attaches to the pubic bone at the front, the tail bone at the back (coccyx), and the sides of the pelvis.

The main functions of the pelvic floor are:

- **Maintain continence** - help control your bladder and bowel by tightly closing the urethra (bladder outlet) and anus (back passage), preventing leakage
- To allow you to **empty your bladder or bowel**
- **Support** - act to support your pelvic organs (bladder and rectum) and keep them in the correct position
- **Sexual function** - support sex and intimacy by increasing sensation, and assisting with erection and ejaculation
- **Stability** - they assist with pelvic joint stability



What symptoms might be associated with my pelvic floor muscles not working properly?

- **Urinary leakage** during coughing, laughing, sneezing or sports/physical activities (stress urinary leakage)
- **Bladder or bowel urgency**, which may or may not be associated with accidental leakage
- **'After-dribble'** (urine leakage soon after you have been to the toilet)
- **Sexual dysfunction:** achieving/maintaining an erection, altered ejaculation
- **Leakage from the bowel** of faeces (poo), or difficulty in controlling wind (flatus)

Why are my pelvic floor muscles not working properly?

There are a number of reasons your pelvic floor may not be working effectively, and this can happen at any age:

- Some operations for the prostate can affect the bladder outlet valve
- Chronic constipation and straining when emptying the bowels can lead to muscle weakening
- Certain conditions, for example: Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Stroke and Diabetes
- Injury to the perineum (the area from the base of the penis to the back passage)

Although there is not yet research evidence, it is thought that a lack of general fitness may result in a weakening of the pelvic floor.

How do I find my pelvic floor muscles?

It is important to make sure that you are doing these exercises in the right way; with the pelvic floor exercises it is about quality not quantity.

1. Sit or lie comfortably. Let the muscles of your thighs, buttocks and abdomen relax.
2. Tighten (squeeze) the muscles around the back passage, as if you are trying to stop yourself passing wind.
3. Whilst maintaining the squeeze around the back passage, also imagine that you are passing urine and trying to stop the flow mid-stream.
4. Aim to feel like you are drawing your penis in towards your stomach, and lifting your testicles. You can check your technique by looking in a mirror.

How do I exercise my pelvic floor muscles?

Now that you have practised feeling the pelvic floor working, you can start to build strength, endurance and flexibility. To start it may be easier to do these pelvic floor squeezes lying down, and as your strength increases you can progress to seated and then standing positions.

Long squeezes

- Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles and hold for several seconds, and then fully release for several seconds
- Count how long you can hold this squeeze for. If you feel the muscle dropping, then this is the end of your squeeze and sets the length of time for which you are to hold and repeat your pelvic floor squeezes

- Repeat this long hold until you feel that the muscles are tired. Count how many times you are able to repeat this exercise before your muscle is no longer able to maintain the squeeze

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

“The knack”

If you leak with particular activities (like sneezing, coughing or lifting) 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 is a technique that is often called “the knack”.

If you have ‘after dribble’ try doing a strong squeeze and lift of your pelvic floor muscle, followed by a full relaxation, after your urine flow has stopped. This may help to empty the small amount of urine that would otherwise be left in your urethra.

Getting the right technique

Try to breathe in and out normally whilst you do your exercises. You may feel your lower tummy muscles gently 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.

DO

Dedicate time to your pelvic floor

Fully relax the muscles before each squeeze and lift

**DO
NOT**

Do not hold your breath

Do not tighten your buttocks or thighs

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). 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 at first.

What exercise programme is right for me?

After your appointment with the physiotherapist, they will give you a personalised exercise programme. This may include a mix of long holds, short squeezes and sub-maximal holds. If your exercise programme needs to be more personalised your physiotherapist will provide more information at the end of this leaflet.

Long holds: Practise holding your 'squeeze and lift' for _____ seconds. Relax completely.

Repeat this long hold _____ times.

Short squeezes: Practise _____ short squeezes.

Sub-maximal holds: Practise holding your gentle contraction (about 50% of your maximum squeeze) for up to _____ seconds.

Repeat this _____ times.

Progressing your exercise programme

Gradually increase the length of time you hold your long squeeze for and the number of repetitions over the next few weeks and months. Most men need to aim for up to 10 long squeezes, held for up to 10 seconds each, followed by up to 10 short squeezes. For some, this will be too easy; for others, this may be too difficult. Start with what you feel is a comfortable length of time for you to squeeze.

I keep forgetting to do my exercises, what should I do?

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)
- Reminder notes at home or work, e.g. colourful stickers
- Do them after a specific activity, e.g. emptying your bladder

Other tips to help your pelvic floor

- Avoid constipation and prevent any straining during a bowel movement
- Seek medical advice for hayfever, asthma or bronchitis to reduce sneezing and coughing
- Keep your weight within the right range for your height and age
- Share the lifting of heavy loads

Additional information

How do I contact my physiotherapist?

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.

Your Feedback We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible - talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve it, then ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care.

OUR VALUES

Proud of the Paget

Collaboration

We work positively with others to achieve shared aims

Accountability

We act with professionalism and integrity, delivering what we commit to, embedding learning when things do not go to plan

Respect

We are anti-discriminatory, treating people fairly and creating a sense of belonging and pride

Empowerment

We speak out when things don't feel right, we are innovative and make changes to support continuous improvement

Support

We are compassionate, listen attentively and are kind to ourselves and each other

Before leaving please complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.

Help us transform NHS services and to support patient choice.



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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