

# Kegel Exercises for Men to strengthen bladder control

The following information is based on the general experiences of many patients. Your experience may be different. If you have any questions please contact your health care provider.

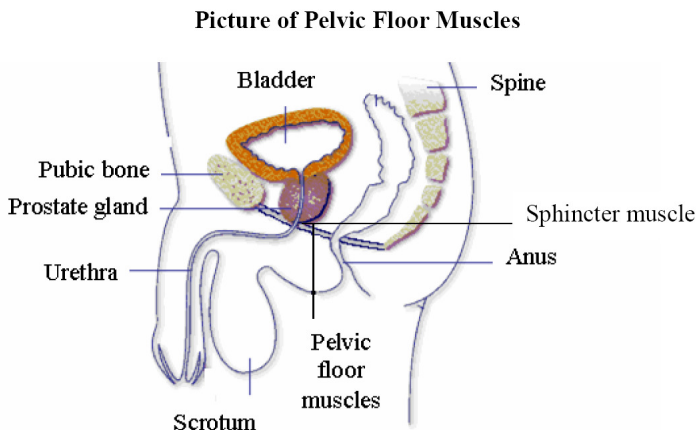
For some people, the muscles that help you control your urine flow may be weakened. When this happens you may have incontinence. Incontinence is when you leak or pass urine when you do not want to.

The good news is that there is a simple exercise, called a Kegel (Key-gul) exercise, you can do to help strengthen your muscles. This exercise will help you have more control over your urine

## What Are Pelvic Floor Muscles?

Your pelvic floor muscles are a network of muscles that support your bladder and help you control your urine flow. There are three pelvic muscles:

1. The bladder. Your bladder is a muscle shaped like a balloon and holds your urine.
2. The sphincter muscles. These muscles help you open and close your urethra, the tube that drains urine from your bladder. And,
3. The pelvic floor muscle [also known as the pubococcygeus (pu-bo-kak sij-eus) or PC muscle] supports your bladder and rectum and helps control your urine flow.



## **What Are Kegel Exercises?**

Kegel exercises are easy exercises you can do to help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. These muscles help control your urine flow. Kegel exercises are one of the most effective ways of controlling incontinence without medication or surgery.

## **Why Should I Do Kegel Exercises?**

The prostate is a gland, about the size of a walnut, located under the bladder surrounding the upper part of the urethra. The urethra is a tube that carries urine through the penis to the outside of the body. There are many muscles that surround the prostate gland. These muscles may be weakened and may cause you to have urine leakage also known as incontinence. Building up the strength in your pelvic floor muscles can help you gain better control of your bladder and urine flow. Remember, that just as it takes time to build your biceps and strengthen any other muscle in your body, it takes time to strengthen muscles in your pelvic floor.

## **How Do I Find My Pelvic Muscles?**

In order to help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles, it is important that you take time to make sure you are exercising the right muscles. It may take you several tries to find your pelvic muscles. So, take your time.

There are several ways that you can find your pelvic floor muscles. One way is to try to stop and start your urine stream while you stand at your toilet to urinate (pee). Try to do this two or three times.

Another way to find your pelvic floor muscles is to imagine that someone walks in to your bathroom while you are urinating (peeing) and you need to stop your urine flow. Then try to stop your urine flow.

The muscles you use to stop your urine flow are your pelvic floor muscles. These are the muscles you want to strengthen.

## **How Do I Do A Kegel Exercise?**

Now that you have located your pelvic floor muscles, you can exercise them even when you do not have to urinate (pee) by following these simple steps:

1. Tighten and hold your pelvic floor muscles for five seconds (count 1 one thousand, 2 one thousand, 3 one thousand, 4 one thousand, 5 one thousand).
2. Relax your pelvic muscles.

You have just done one Kegel exercise.

You should plan to do 10 to 20 Kegel exercises three to four times each day.

Another way to tighten your pelvic floor muscles is to:

1. Squeeze the muscles in your anus (like you are holding a bowel movement).
2. Relax your pelvic floor muscles after each attempt.
3. Repeat this exercise 10 to 20 times.

When you do your Kegel exercises, remember:

- Do not hold your breath.
- Do not push down. Squeeze your muscles together tightly and imagine that you are trying to lift this muscle up.
- Do not tighten the muscles in your stomach, buttocks, or thighs.
- Relax your pelvic floor muscles between each squeeze.

### **How Often Should I Do Kegel Exercises?**

When you first start doing your Kegel exercises, you may not be able to repeat the exercise 10 to 20 times. This is okay. It is much better for you to do fewer Kegel exercises that make your pelvic floor muscles stronger, than to do more exercises that do not work the muscle in the right way. As you get better at doing your Kegel exercises, slowly increase the number of times you repeat the exercise until you reach 20. Your goal should be to do 20 Kegel exercise three to four times each day.

The great thing about Kegel exercises is that you can do them anytime you want to do them. No one can tell that you are doing these exercises. You do not need any special equipment to do Kegel exercises. You can do your Kegel exercises before you get up in the morning, at lunchtime, at supertime, and at bedtime. You can do them while you are watching TV or reading. Some men put notes on their refrigerator or on their bathroom mirror to remind them to do their Kegel exercises. Kegel exercises can help both men and women. Some men's partners do the exercises with them. The more you do them, the stronger your pelvic floor muscles will become.