

## Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, which support the bladder, bowel, and uterus. When these exercises are done correctly, it may help people who are experiencing bladder and bowel leaking, chronic constipation, and pelvic and rectal leaking. Keeping your pelvic floor muscles toned can also help reduce risks of incontinence and similar problems as you get older.

### Who Can Benefit

There are many conditions that may put stress on your pelvic floor muscles. These include:

1. Pregnancy
2. Childbirth
3. Being overweight
4. Aging
5. Chronic cough
6. Genetic predisposition to weak connective tissue

When your pelvic floor muscles are weak, then your pelvic organs descend and bulge into your vagina, a condition known as pelvic organ prolapse. Kegel exercises are recommended especially during pregnancy. Well-toned pelvic floor muscles may make you more comfortable as you get closer to delivering your baby.

### Finding The Right Muscles

To do these exercises correctly, tighten the pelvic muscles as if you are trying to prevent the flow of urine. To get the maximum benefit, focus on isolating only the pelvic floor muscles and trying not to use the abdomen, the legs, or the buttocks. Remember these muscles are voluntary which means that we can control them. Also, make sure that you are not holding your breath.

Then, try to hold the contraction for about 10 seconds. When muscles are weak, it is hard to hold them for this long. If you feel the muscles letting go, it is okay - just let them go. The next step is to let the muscles relax or rest for 10 seconds.

One set of Kegel exercises is 10 repetitions. Do one set 10 times a day. You might make a practice of fitting in a set every time you do a routine task, such as checking your email, during commercials while watching your favorite show, or while you are eating a meal. As with other forms of physical activity, you need to make Kegels a lifelong practice to help prevent issues now and when you get older.

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/kegel-exercises](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/kegel-exercises)

**The health information contained herein is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a healthcare provider. Decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare provider, considering the unique characteristics of the patient.**

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