

## Kegel Exercises

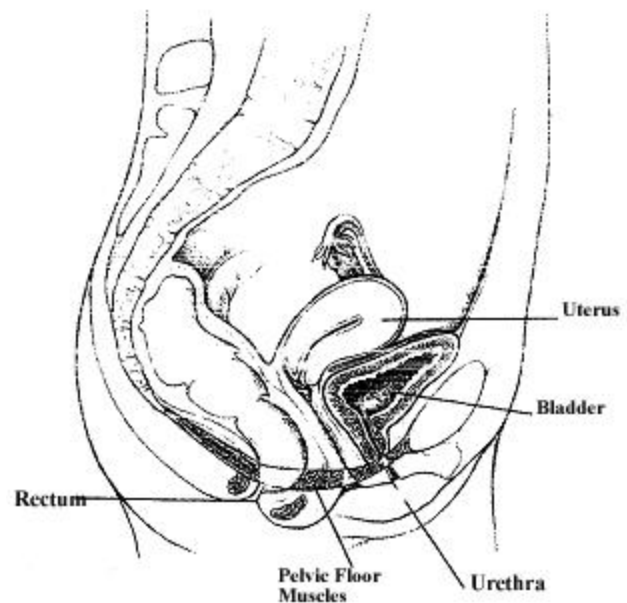
Kegel exercises are recommended for both women and men who experience any degree of urinary leakage. They are designed to strengthen the muscles around the bladder and bladder opening. By exercising these muscles, you may improve your symptoms.

It is important that you perform the exercises correctly to gain the maximum benefits from these exercises.

### Finding the Pelvic Muscles

Tighten your rectum as if you are trying to control passing gas or pinching off a stool. Do not tense the muscles of your legs, buttocks or abdomen, and do not hold your breath. You can also imagine you are stopping the flow of urine. When men tighten the muscles, the penis will move up and down.

*If you are unsure you are using the proper muscles, or if your symptoms do not improve, ask your physician, nurse or therapist to help you identify the muscles.*



### How to Do the Kegel Exercises

- Exercise is best done after emptying your bladder.
- Tighten the muscles and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. As your muscles get stronger, you should be able to tighten your muscles for 10 seconds or longer.
- Relax for 3 to 5 seconds or for as long as you tightened the muscles.
- Breathe normally.
- Do 5 to 7 exercises at a time, 3 times a day. Increase up to 15 exercises at a time, 3 times a day.

### When to Exercise the Muscles

The Kegel exercises can be done anywhere or anytime – sitting, lying or standing. People around you will not even know you are doing them. Just develop a routine so you remember to exercise every day. Do these exercises when you have an incontinent episode. For example, if you are experiencing urine leakage on the way to the bathroom, stop and exercise your pelvic muscles until the leakage passes then continue to the bathroom. If you leak urine when you cough, tighten the muscles quickly when you cough.

### Things to Remember

- Tighten the pelvic floor muscles only. DO NOT tighten leg, buttocks or abdomen muscles.
- Breathe normally when exercising.
- Exercise takes time to strengthen the muscles. You should start noticing less leakage after 4 to 6 weeks of consistent daily exercise and even a larger difference after 3 months. If you do not see an improvement, you may not be exercising the correct muscles. Please revisit your health care professional periodically for advice.