

Kegel Exercises

Practice these exercises anywhere, anytime:

Sitting watching TV, waiting for a bus, doing housework, standing in line at the bank or elsewhere, during sexual relations, stopped in traffic, cuddling your baby.

During these exercises you should **not**:

- feel any downward movement as you contract the muscles.
 - tighten your thighs or buttocks.
 - hold your breath.
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1. Slow Hold (Hold-ems)

- Sit or lie comfortably with your legs wide apart.
- Close your eyes and imagine that you want to “hold on” and stop yourself from passing urine or wind.
- Squeeze the muscles around your front passage (vagina) and back passage (anus) as strongly as possible and hold tightly for three seconds. By doing this you should feel the pelvic floor muscles lift up inside. Relax for at least five seconds.
- Repeat this “squeeze and lift” movement up to 10 times, holding the contraction for three to five seconds or as long as 10 to 15 seconds if you are able. Ensure that the squeeze stays strong and you can feel the “let go.”
- Rest for one minute before you proceed to the next exercise.

2. Quick Squeeze (Speed-ems)

- Squeeze and lift the pelvic floor muscles as strongly and quickly as possible. Don’t try to hold on to the contraction; just squeeze and let go.
- Gradually increase the speed of each contraction and the number of repetitions before the muscle tires. Allow a three-second rest in between each exercise.
- Repeat 10 times. Do this several times a day.

3. Squeeze and Hold (Squeeze-ems)

- Squeeze the pelvic floor muscles and hold for a slow count of five to start, working your way up to 10. Relax and rest for 10 seconds.
- Repeat five to 10 times. Do this several times a day.

4. Elevator Exercise (Elevate-ems)

- Visualize your midsection as an apartment tower. Using your pelvic floor muscles, draw upwards to the first floor and hold for five seconds.
- While continuing to hold, draw upwards to the second floor a five seconds.
- Release and repeat several times per day. Sitting on a pillow, disc will help increase your ability to contract.



5. Belly Button Breathing

- Using your diaphragm draw a breath in through your nose.
- Exhale through your mouth as you say HA HA HA.
- Do one to three sets of 10 repetitions.

6. Baby Hugs

- Sitting with your back supported, use your transverse abdominals to wrap around your baby or a pillow and give it a hug.
- Give your baby or pillow a bigger hug, then the biggest hug. Your belly button should be pulling toward the spine.
- Do one to three sets of 10 repetitions.



In addition to these specific exercises, remember to tense up your pelvic floor every time you cough, sneeze or lift – most people do this automatically. Regular general exercise will also have a positive effect on the strength of your pelvic floor muscles. Once you feel confident about doing these exercises you may try them in different positions such as standing, or lying on your back, side or stomach.

To prevent further damage to pelvic floor muscles, avoid:

- straining with a bowel movement or being constipated
- repeated heavy lifting
- repetitive coughing or sneezing.

For many women it is important to follow a specific exercise program tailored to their individual needs. If you are unsure whether you are exercising these muscles correctly, or if you have urinary problems, you should consult your physician and see a women's health physical therapist.