

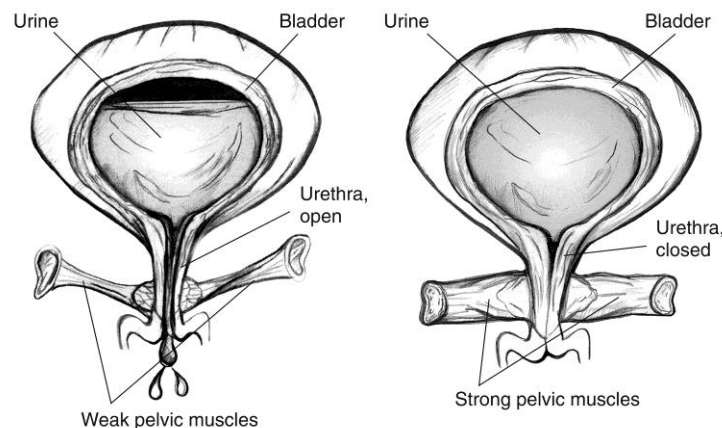


Kegels: Male Pelvic Floor Exercises

What are Kegel exercises?

Kegel exercises strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. These muscles support the bladder and bowel openings in men. Strengthening the muscles of the pelvic floor can aid in preventing leakage of urine or feces when you cough, sneeze, lift, or do other stressful movements. Other benefits of kegels include:

- Enhanced sexual function
- Decreased or prevention of prolapsed pelvic organs
- Improved ability to pass stool.



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Who should do Kegel exercises?

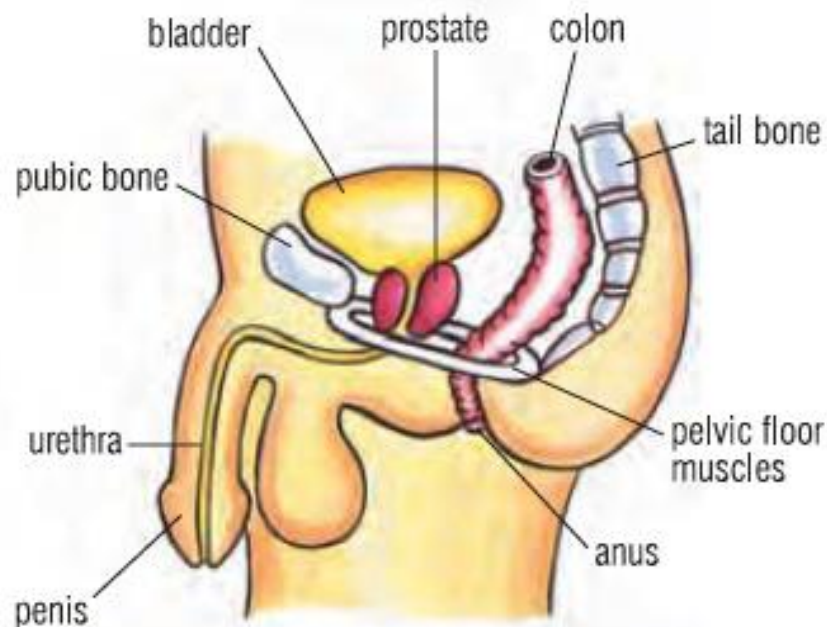
- Men with urinary or bowel incontinence
- Men who have demonstrated weakening of the pelvic floor
- Middle aged and older men

What do I need to know about Kegels?

Your success while doing Kegel exercises depends on you practicing them correctly and regularly. When doing the exercises, it is important to identify the

correct muscles of the pelvic floor. At first, most people contract the abdominal or thigh muscles while forgetting the pelvic floor muscles. This could make pelvic floor tone and incontinence worse.

If you are not sure that you are doing the Kegel exercise correctly, ask your doctor to refer you to a Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist (PT). The PT will evaluate you and provide specific instructions on how to do the exercises.



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You may do Kegels as part of biofeedback. Biofeedback consists of placing a sensor on the abdomen and around the anal area, which measures the tightening of the pelvic floor muscles. Occasionally, an electrode may be placed in your rectum.

How do I do effective Kegel exercises?

Three (3) steps to an effective Kegel:

1. Squeeze muscles around the urethra like you are stopping the flow of urine

2. Tighten and elevate your muscles between the anus and scrotum.
3. Combine steps 1 and 2.

When you perform steps 1 and 2 correctly, you should feel the muscles around your anus tighten. This is normal, but do try to tighten those muscles on purpose.

Detailed instructions for doing Kegel exercises

Step #1: The urethra—The Functional Stop Test

After partially emptying your bladder, stop your urine flow in a slow controlled manner, paying attention to how it feels.

Note: Stopping and starting the urine repeatedly as an exercise can be harmful and should not be done. Holding your urine can contribute to bladder infection, causing damage to normal urinary reflexes. The Functional Stop Test is useful for assessing what it feels like to gradually stop urine flow, but **do not do it more than once per week.**

Step #2: The rectum as your window to the pelvic floor

Place one or two fingers on the area between the anus and the scrotum. Lightly tighten that area (the perineum). You should feel this area become firm on your finger(s). It may be helpful to think of lifting the scrotum or penis using the muscles of the perineal area

Step #3: Putting it all together

Standing in front of a mirror, you should see your penis and scrotum slightly lift when you are performing the exercise correctly. It will be easiest to perform the exercise in a lying or reclining position at first. Practice using the pelvic floor muscles as in steps 1 and 2 until you can do these exercises in different settings or positions throughout the day.

How long and how many do I do?

When you are first starting out, it is common to find that you can only hold a Kegel for 3-6 seconds and doing 3-6 repetitions causes muscle fatigue. When this happens, you are usually performing the exercise correctly. If you find you can hold it for much longer right away, recheck your technique. For patients with incontinence or pelvic floor weakness, it is important to focus on doing the technique correctly. You may be weak first starting out, and gradually improve your muscle quality and tone.

Making Kegels a part of your life:

After you have become experienced in performing these exercises, you will want to do them as follows:

- A series of strong, steady squeezes for 8-10 seconds each
- 8-10 at a time
- 30 repetitions per day

As they get easier, you will find you can do them while sitting or standing, for example, you can do them while driving, working on the computer, or waiting in long lines.

Please note that you may not see any noticeable change in bowel or bladder control for a while. In some cases, it may take many months..

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Reviewer: Kim Erickson, PT

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