

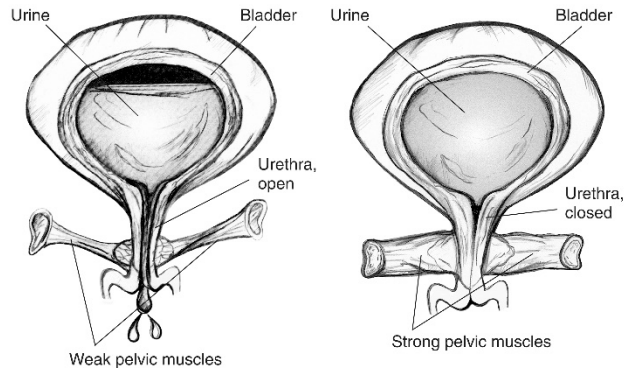
Kegel Exercises

Kegels, or Kegel exercises, are pelvic floor muscle exercises that can help:

- Improve bladder and bowel control
- Prevent **incontinence** (leaking pee or stool by accident)
- Manage **pelvic organ prolapse** (when organs in the pelvis move down from their normal position and bulge into the vagina)
- Improve orgasm and sexual response

To help you find and control your pelvic floor muscles to do your Kegel exercises, you can think about:

- Stopping the flow of urine (pee) midstream (warning: don't do your Kegel exercises while urinating)
- Trying to stop passing gas (farting)
- Gently closing your anal opening (a feeling of squeezing and lifting)
- Bringing your tail bone toward your pubic bone, or bringing your sit bones together



Weak pelvic muscles (left) and strong pelvic muscles (right)

People with vaginas might think about gently closing your vaginal opening, trying to pick a marble up with your vagina, or trying to keep a tampon in or draw it further into your body. People with penises might think about pulling your penis back into the body (“pulling the turtle head back into the shell”) or walking into cold water.

Do not hold your breath while squeezing your pelvic floor muscles, and avoid tightening your butt muscles. Doing too many Kegels will tire out your pelvic floor. Follow your physical therapist’s instructions for how to do Kegels:

Long contractions (“long holds”):	Short contractions (“quick flicks”):
Hold for _____ seconds	Hold for _____ seconds
Rest for _____ seconds	Rest for _____ seconds
Repeat ____ times, ____ times per day	Repeat ____ times, ____ times per day

Position to do your Kegels in:	Do with:
_____ Lying on your side _____ Lying on back, hips on pillow _____ On hands and knees _____ Sitting with / without towel _____ Standing, feet together / apart _____ Squatting / lunging	_____ Coughing _____ Sneezing _____ Sit to stand movement _____ Lifting something

Coordination exercise (Kegel and reverse Kegel):
Contract for _____ seconds Relax for _____ seconds Bulge (push) for _____ seconds

Disclaimer: This document contains instructions for occupational and/or physical therapy exercises developed by University of Michigan Health. Your health care provider has determined that these exercises are beneficial to you based on your condition at this time. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan, including whether it is appropriate to continue doing these exercises should your condition change.

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