

PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE EXERCISES FOR MEN

The pelvic floor muscles are attached to the pubic bone at the front of the pelvis, and to the coccyx (tail bone) at the back. They work to support the abdominal contents and help control the flow of urine from the bladder and faeces from the bowel. They form a broad sling, and as their name suggests, form the floor of the pelvis.

You can improve bladder and bowel control by working hard at these exercises and should see improvement in a few weeks but may not reach maximum performance for several months.

How to exercise

Internally, tighten the muscles around the anal sphincter as if preventing passing wind and, while still holding this contraction, tighten the muscles at the base of the penis as if trying to stop the flow of urine. If you are doing this correctly you should feel a 'squeeze and a lift'. You can check by looking in a mirror as you should be able to see the penis retract and the scrotum raise. (It can be helpful to place a hand under the scrotum to feel a lift up off your fingers).

Hold this pelvic floor contraction for as many seconds as you can (**up to a maximum of 10**) without holding your breath, tightening your buttocks or your inner thigh muscles.

You should also contract transversus (the horizontal abdominal muscle) in conjunction with your pelvic floor muscles. The action of transversus is as if you are contracting the abdominal muscle between your navel and pubic bone inwards towards your spine.

Aim to progress your pelvic floor exercises by finding out how many seconds you can hold this contraction **maximally** and for how many repetitions (**up to a maximum of 10**).

As well as these slow contractions, try some fast 1 second contractions again **up to a maximum of 10**.

Try both these exercises lying down then in a sitting position and eventually in standing **x3 per day**.

Remember that **quality is better than quantity!** Fewer good exercises done maximally are more beneficial than many half-hearted ones.

Where to exercise

Get used to tightening your pelvic floor muscles after every urination to help empty the bladder but don't try mid-stream stops as this can cause urinary retention.

Always pull up these muscles strongly when changing position, particularly when sitting to standing, before coughing or sneezing, walking and before lifting any object.

As well as doing your exercises x3 day, get used to pulling up these muscles **30% of max when walking around**.

Continue doing your pelvic floor exercises **x3** times a day until the muscles have strengthened and then **10 second hold 10 reps and 10 fast exercises x1 day for life**.

Try to avoid weakening these muscles further by not putting on any extra weight or becoming constipated.

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