

# Kegal Exercises

## Why exercise your pelvic muscles?

Life's events can weaken pelvic muscles including pregnancy and childbirth. Fortunately, when these muscles get weak, you can make them strong again. Pelvic floor muscles are just like other muscles. Exercise can make them stronger. Women with bladder control problems can regain control through pelvic muscle exercises called Kegal exercises.

## Pelvic fitness in minutes a day-

Exercising your pelvic floor muscles for just 5 minutes, three times a day can make a big difference to your bladder control. Exercise strengthens muscles that hold the bladder and many other organs in place.

At the bottom of the pelvis, there are several layers of muscle stretched between your legs. The muscles attach to the front, back, and sides of the pelvic bone. Two pelvic muscles do most of the work. The biggest one stretches like a hammock. The other is shaped like a triangle. These muscles prevent the leaking of urine and stool.

## How do you exercise your pelvic muscles?

### Finding the right muscles-

This is very important. You should tighten the two major muscles that stretch across your pelvic floor. They are the "hammock" muscle and the "triangle" muscle. Here are three methods to check if you are using the correct muscles:

- Try to stop the flow of urine when you are sitting on the toilet. If you can do it, you are using the right muscles.
- Imagine that you are trying to stop passing gas. Squeeze the muscles you would use. If you sense a "pulling" feeling, you are using the correct muscles.
- Lie down and put your finger inside your vagina. Squeeze as if you were trying to stop urine from coming out. If you feel tightness on your finger, you are using the correct pelvic muscles.

### Do not squeeze other muscles at the same time-

Be careful not to tighten your stomach, legs, or other muscles. Squeezing the wrong muscles can put more pressure on your bladder control muscles. Just squeeze the pelvic muscles and do not hold your breath.

**Repeat, but do not overdo it-**

At first, find a quiet spot to practice and concentrate like your bedroom or bathroom. Sit or lie down and pull in the pelvic muscles and hold for a count of three. Then relax for a count of three. Work up to 10-15 times each time during the day when you do Kegal exercises.

**Do your exercises at least three times a day-**

Try to use three different positions to do your exercises. You can do them while lying on the floor or bed, sitting at a desk, relaxing with your feet up, or standing while doing dishes. Using all positions will make your muscles the strongest.

**Be patient-**

Do not give up; it is just minutes a day. You may not feel your bladder control improve for 3-6 weeks; however, most women will notice improvement after a few weeks.

**Points to remember:**

- Weak pelvic muscles often cause bladder control problems
- Daily exercises can strengthen pelvic muscles
- These exercises often improve bladder control
- Ask your midwife if you are concerned that you are not squeezing the correct muscles
- Train yourself to tighten your pelvic muscles before sneezing, lifting, or jumping. This can prevent pelvic muscle damage, as well as leaking small amounts of urine.