



Christopher M. Lynch, MD
Corinna A. Cooper, MD

Abigail R. Proffer, MD

Jaclyn Piszczek, MD
Jessica Williams, MD

GUIDELINES FOR PELVIC-FLOOR (KEGEL) EXERCISES

What are pelvic-floor exercises?

A learned technique of relaxing and contracting your perivaginal muscles. These exercises are designed to strengthen and give you voluntary control of the muscle that encircles the urinary opening.

How to identify the correct muscles (two suggested techniques):

- Place a finger in the vagina. Squeeze around the finger.
- On urinating, stop the urine stream.

THESE ARE THE MUSCLES THAT SHOULD BE EXERCISED!!!

It is very easy to use the incorrect muscles. The most common mistake is to use your abdominal muscles. Place a hand on the lower abdomen. If you feel tightening when doing the exercises, you are using the abdominals. To decrease this muscle contraction, take slow, deep breaths and re-identify the correct muscles.

Performing the exercises:

Now that the muscles have been identified, each exercise should consist of a 10 second period of contraction and a 10 second period of relaxation. In the beginning, do not become discouraged if you are unable to hold your contraction for 10 seconds. This will improve with time. Also, remember that the 10 second period of relaxation is just as important as the period of contraction.

- Twenty exercises should be preformed three times a day.
- Pelvic-floor exercises can be performed any time, any place. When the exercise is performed correctly, no observer can detect that you are performing it.

When to use pelvic-floor exercises:

If you are incontinent when you laugh or perform strenuous activities, contracting your muscles as you are coughing, jumping, swinging a golf club, etc.

If you are incontinent when you get the urge to urinate:

- a) Do not run to the bathroom
- b) Stop. Contract your pelvic-floor muscles. Take some deep breaths. Walk at a normal pace to the bathroom.