



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Pelvic Floor Muscle (Kegel) Exercises for Men

This information will teach you how to do pelvic floor muscle (Kegel) exercises.

About Kegel Exercises

The goal of Kegel exercises is to help you strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. These muscles support your bladder and bowel.

Kegel exercises can help you:

- Manage or prevent leakage of urine and stool (poop), known as incontinence.
- Improve your sexual health.

About Your Pelvic Floor Muscles

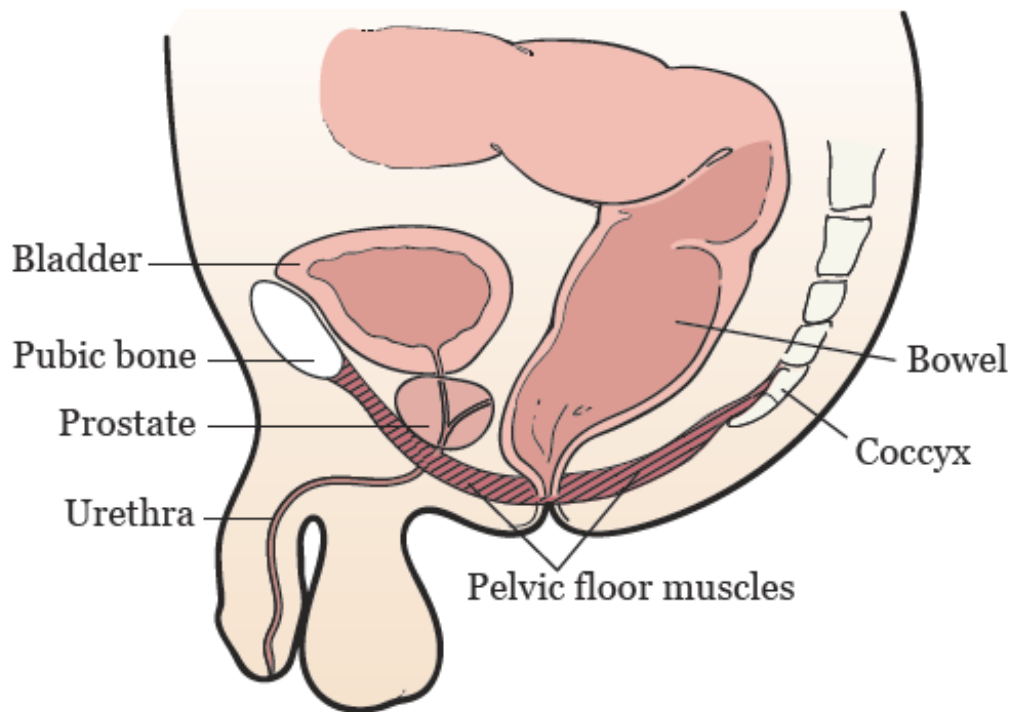


Figure 1. Your pelvic floor muscles

Your pelvic floor muscles make up the bottom of your pelvis and support your pelvic organs (see Figure 1). They're the muscles that relax when you're urinating (peeing), passing gas, or having a bowel movement (pooping). Your pelvic floor muscles are also the same muscles that you would use to hold in your urine in and prevent urine leakage or hold back gas.

To test this out, while you pass your first stream of urine in the morning, try to stop the stream. The muscles you're using are your pelvic floor muscles. Don't do this often because starting and stopping your urine stream every time you urinate can be harmful.

How to Do Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises are very easy to do. You can do them anywhere

without anyone knowing.

To do a Kegel exercise, follow these steps:

- Start by holding your pelvic floor muscles in for 5 seconds. To pull in your pelvic floor, think of pulling in and lifting up your genitals. Don't hold your breath while you do this. Counting out loud can stop you from holding your breath.
- After holding for 5 seconds, slowly and completely relax your muscles for 5 seconds.
- Repeat this process 10 times, at least 3 times every day.

Your pelvic floor muscles may get tired during this exercise. If this happens, stop and do the exercise at a later time.

Don't use your stomach, leg, or buttock muscles when doing this exercise. Exercising these muscles won't help you regain urinary control or improve your sexual health.

As you continue to practice these exercises, you should increase the time you hold and rest your pelvic floor muscles. Start with 5 seconds, and slowly build up the time each week until you're holding in and resting for 10 seconds.

When to Do Kegel Exercises

Most people prefer doing Kegel exercises while lying down on a bed or sitting in a chair. You can do them in any position you feel

comfortable in. Doing Kegel exercises while standing can be very helpful because that's usually when urinary leakage happens.

To keep your urine from leaking, try to do a Kegel exercise before these activities:

- When standing up
- Walking
- Walking to the bathroom
- Sneezing or coughing
- Laughing

Regularly doing these exercises will help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles and reduce urinary leakage.



Don't do Kegel exercises while you have a Foley[®] catheter (thin, flexible tube) in place.

Pain and Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises shouldn't hurt. Most people find them relaxing and easy. But if you use the wrong muscles during Kegel exercises, you may feel uncomfortable.

- If you get back or stomach pain after doing the exercises, you may be trying too hard and using your stomach or back

muscles instead of your pelvic floor muscles.

- If you get a headache after doing the exercises, you may be making your chest muscles tight and holding your breath.

If you have any questions, call your nurse. You may also want to talk to your healthcare team about pelvic floor physical therapy. Pelvic floor physical therapy can help you with issues you might be having in your bladder, bowels or pelvic area.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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