

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy

Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises and Advice for Men

Information for men

The pelvic floor muscles form a broad muscular sling across the base of the pelvis. They help the closure mechanisms of the bladder and bowel and prevent urine, faecal and wind incontinence. They are also important muscles for sexual function and will help to maintain an erection.

Men of all ages can suffer from incontinence or erectile dysfunction. Daily exercises to improve pelvic floor muscle strength can help ease these symptoms.

Symptoms

Symptoms of weak pelvic floor muscles may include:

Leaking urine, this may be a few drops or a steady flow throughout the day or it may occur with activities such as coughing, sneezing, standing up or bending over.

A sudden urge to urinate and sometimes leaking before you get to the toilet.

The need to urinate more often than usual, during the day and night.

Dribbling urine after you have finished urinating.

Leaking when sexually aroused.

Causes of pelvic floor weakness or dysfunction

There are many reasons why you might have urinary symptoms. Some of these causes are listed below:

Prostate surgery can affect the pelvic floor muscle and its nerve supply. Additionally pelvic radiation therapy can affect the muscle function.

A lack of regular exercise or weight gain can lead to poor muscle tone and excess stress on the pelvic floor muscle resulting in weakness.

Activities such as repeated and ongoing heavy lifting, coughing or constipation may stretch and weaken the pelvic floor muscles.

Local injury to the area of tissue between the base of the penis and the back passage. This can be as a result of a direct blow or prolonged pressure such as long periods of cycling.

Certain conditions that affect the nerve supply to the pelvic floor muscle which will result in muscle weakness such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis or stroke.

Finding your pelvic floor muscles

It is important that you find the correct muscles and exercise them in the correct way. To do this your buttock, thigh and abdominal muscles should be relaxed.

Sit comfortably and imagine you are trying to squeeze your back passage, imagine you are trying to stop passing wind. Try not to squeeze your buttocks together or tighten your thigh muscles.

At the same time imagine you are trying to stop yourself from passing urine or trying to shorten/draw your penis inwards. You should feel a squeeze and lift underneath.

If you are contracting these muscles correctly you should feel and see a dip at the base of your penis and your scrotum lift a little. It might be helpful to do these exercises in front of a mirror to start so that you can see the movement.

Exercising your pelvic floor muscles

It is important to do sustained and fast contractions to strengthen these muscles. These exercises should be done in lying, sitting and standing positions.

Sustained pelvic floor muscle contraction: Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles. Try and hold this squeeze for 10 seconds. Continue to breathe normally during the contraction. Aim to repeat this up to 10 times with a rest of 5 seconds in between each contraction.

You may find that you are not able to hold this contraction for 10 seconds, in which case hold for as long as you can and gradually increase this hold as you get stronger.

Fast pelvic floor muscle contraction: Repeat the same action with a strong contraction, hold the lift for 1 second and then let go. Try and repeat this up to 10 times.

If you would like more advice on these exercises please ask your physiotherapist who is an incontinence specialist and will be able to help you with these exercises.

It is advisable to do 6 sets of these exercises daily and try to fit them into your daily routine.

Engaging pelvic floor muscles during activity

Throughout the day try and engage your pelvic floor muscles during activities which result in additional strain on your pelvic floor such as lifting, coughing, sneezing, standing up from sitting and sitting up from lying.

By adding five to ten minutes of high step ups (using a step higher than a regular indoor step) daily will add to improved pelvic floor engagement. Avoid this exercise if it causes any back, knee or hip pain.

You can watch this instructional video- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ7EfGu03-0>

Sources of information

ESHT Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team

www.pogp.org.uk Pelvic floor muscle exercises and advice for men

Squeezy NHS app for a Pelvic floor exercise programme with reminders on smartphones

Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Community Health and Integrated Care

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