

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy RARP 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 – Pre operative

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: 3 – 5 times daily

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

Fast pelvic floor muscle contraction: 3 – 5 times daily

Repeat the same action with a strong contraction, hold the lift for 1 second and then let go. Try and repeat this up to 5-10 times. Aim to gradually increase this to 10 times.

Exercising your pelvic floor muscles – Post operative

Only to be undertaken **AFTER CATHETER REMOVAL** and when passing urine normally.

Sustained pelvic floor muscle contraction: 3 times daily

Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor muscles. Try and hold this squeeze for 3 seconds. Continue to breathe normally during the contraction. Aim to repeat this up to 3 times with a rest of 3 seconds in between each contraction.

Fast pelvic floor muscle contraction: 3 times daily

Repeat the same action with a strong contraction, hold the lift for 1 second and then let go. Try and repeat this 3 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.

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.

You can watch this instructional video- <https://youtu.be/rQQSqLCF12g>

High step ups

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.

Continence Aids

Before your surgery it is advisable to source some continence pads or pants of varying absorbencies these are available via the internet or larger supermarkets (most supermarkets have their own brand). Please note you will be provided with some at your pre-assessment appointment.

Admission advice

Please ensure you have your parking permit and an allocated driver for your journey home from surgery.

You will need something comfortable to wear in hospital due to abdominal tenderness and the catheter being attached to your upper thigh i.e. boxer shorts and short pyjamas.

Ensure you have loose fitting clothing to wear home. You may also wish to bring some change for vending machines/trolley. You are advised not to bring personal items of high value.

Sources of information

- ESHT Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team
- Squeazy NHS app for a Pelvic floor exercise programme with reminders on smartphones
- Please find below a useful list from the POGP (Pelvic, Obstetric, Gynaecology Physiotherapy including Urology) This is a clinical interest group for Pelvic Health Physiotherapists and patients. You can find these booklets at www.pogp.csp.org.uk – Resources- Booklets. These can be read online and also be printed.
 - Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises (for Men)
 - Improving your Bowel Function
 - The Mitchell Method of Simple Relaxation
 - Promoting Continence with Physiotherapy
 - Pilates in Pelvic Health Physiotherapy

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.

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Reference

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

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

Next review date: August 2024
Responsible clinician/author: Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Department

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