

## PELVIC MUSCLE (KEGEL) EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

### • How to Find the Pelvic (PC) Muscle

To find the muscle, imagine you are at a party and the rich food you have just consumed causes you to have gas. The muscle that you use to hold back gas is the one you want to exercise. Some people find this muscle by voluntarily stopping the stream of urine. Another way to find the muscle is by pulling your rectum, vagina, and urethra up inside. Try to think about the area around the vagina.

### • Exercising the Muscle

Begin by emptying your bladder. Then try to relax completely. Tighten this muscle and hold for a count of 10, or 10 seconds, then relax the muscle completely for a count of 10, or 10 seconds. You should feel a sensation of lifting of the area around your vagina or of pulling around your rectum.

### • When to Exercise

Do 10 exercises in the morning, 10 in the afternoon and 15 at night. Or else you can exercise for 10 minutes three times a day. Set your kitchen timer for 10 minutes three times a day. Initially, you may not be able to hold this contraction for the complete count of 10. However, you will slowly build to 10-second contractions over time. The muscle may start to tire after six or eight exercises. If this happens, stop and go back to exercising later.

### • Where to Practice These Exercises

These exercises can be practiced anywhere and anytime. Most people seem to prefer exercising lying on their bed or sitting in a chair. Women can try doing these exercises during intercourse. Tighten pelvic muscles to grip your partner's penis and then relax. Your partner should be able to feel an increase in pressure.

### • Common Mistakes

Never use your stomach, legs, or buttocks muscles. To find out if you are also contracting your stomach muscle, place your hand on your abdomen while you squeeze your pelvic muscle. If you feel your abdomen move, then you are also using these muscles. In time, you will learn to practice effortlessly. Eventually, work these exercises in as part of your lifestyle; tighten the muscle when you walk, before your sneeze, on the way to the bathroom, and when you stand up.

### • When Will I Notice a Change?

After 4 to 6 weeks of consistent daily exercise, you will notice less urinary accidents; after 3 months you will see an even bigger difference.

### • Can These Exercises Harm Me?

No! These exercises cannot harm you in any way. Most patients find them relaxing and easy. If you get back pain or stomach pain after your exercise, then you are probably trying too hard and using stomach and/or back muscles. Go back and find the PC muscle, and remember this exercise should feel easy. If you experience headaches, then you are also tensing your chest muscles and probably holding your breath.

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