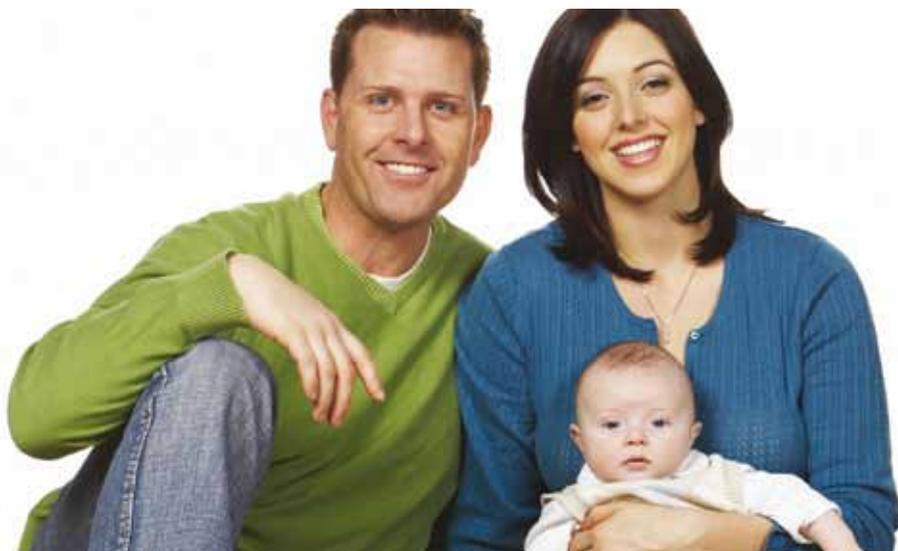


Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises for Men

Improving your bladder control



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68 Hyde Road, Denton, Manchester M34 3AG

Freephone: 0800 652 6667 Fax: 0161 337 8552

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About your pelvic floor muscles

The group of muscles known as the pelvic floor muscles:

- Support the lower abdominal contents especially the bladder and bowel.
- Maintain normal bladder and bowel function and prevent leakage (incontinence).
- Contribute to sexual function.

The muscles extend from the pubic bone to the base of the spine. There are two openings in the pelvic floor, one for the urethra, sometimes called 'the water pipe'(the passageway that carries urine from the bladder), and one through which the bowel empties (anus).

How the pelvic floor muscles may be weakened

In men, the pelvic floor muscles may be weakened as a result of:

- Surgery on the prostate gland
- Constipation which is long-standing
- Chest problems with a chronic cough
- Being overweight
- Being generally unfit
- A medical condition affecting the nervous system
- Lifting heavy loads at work or home

Weak pelvic floor muscles can result in urine leakage on effort of exertion, or on sneezing or coughing.

How to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.

You need to learn and regularly carry out your pelvic floor muscle exercises. To begin, choose a quiet time and place, so you can concentrate on learning the exercises correctly.

Sit, stand or lie down with your feet comfortably apart. You can do the exercises in any of these positions.

Relax and breathe normally.

Pelvic floor muscle exercises:

You are going to learn to carry out both slow and fast pelvic floor muscle exercises. You should aim to do the same number each time.

Concentrate, then squeeze and lift the muscles around the back passage, as if trying not to pass wind. At the same time, pretend you want to pass water but there is no toilet nearby. Squeeze and lift the muscles in your water pipe (urethra). As you tighten the muscles you will feel your scrotum and base of your penis move slightly upwards.

Keeping the muscles tightly squeezed, count slowly and hold for as long as you feel comfortable. Then relax for the same count. Repeat the slow squeeze exercise until the muscles are tired. Try to gradually increase the duration up to 10 seconds if possible. Aim to repeat the 10 second holds as many times as you can aiming for 10 times.

After a short rest, repeat the above exercise but this time quickly twitching the penis upwards as if to the beat of a drum; tighten, relax, tighten, relax. For maximum effect the slow and fast exercises should be repeated several times a day.

Improving your bladder control.

There are other simple measures you can take to promote a healthy bladder and pelvic floor.

To prevent or reduce urine leakage, squeeze the pelvic muscles tightly at the same time as you do any activity that usually causes urine leakage. The procedure is called The Knack.

Reduce the intake of caffeinated drinks such

as tea, coffee, chocolate and fizzy drinks as these can increase bladder and bowel symptoms.

Avoid constipation and straining.

Avoid heavy lifting.

Maintain a fluid intake of 1 and a half litres a day.

If overweight, aim to reduce your weight to an acceptable weight for your height and build.

A chronic cough can weaken the pelvic floor muscles. Always seek advice from your doctor if you have a persistent cough.

Smoking can make a cough worse and tobacco smoking increases the risk of cancers, including bladder cancer. If you would like help in stopping smoking, see your Doctor or Practice Nurse for advice.

If you see any blood in your urine, you should contact your Doctor or Practice Nurse for advice.

The After Dribble

A very common problem is a small urine leak from the water pipe (urethra) after leaving the toilet.

This can be prevented by either tightening the pelvic floor muscles after emptying the bladder, or by placing your hand behind the scrotum and applying firm pressure upwards and slightly forward. Any urine left in the water pipe (urethra) will be expelled into the urinal or toilet.

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