



**ST. MICHAEL'S
HOSPITAL**
Dún Laoghaire

Pelvic Floor Centre

Pelvic floor advice and exercises for men



Pelvic floor exercises for men

The pelvic floor muscles in men support and control the water passage and also control the release of wind and faeces.

The muscles are situated from the tail bone (coccyx) at the back to the pubic bone at the front.

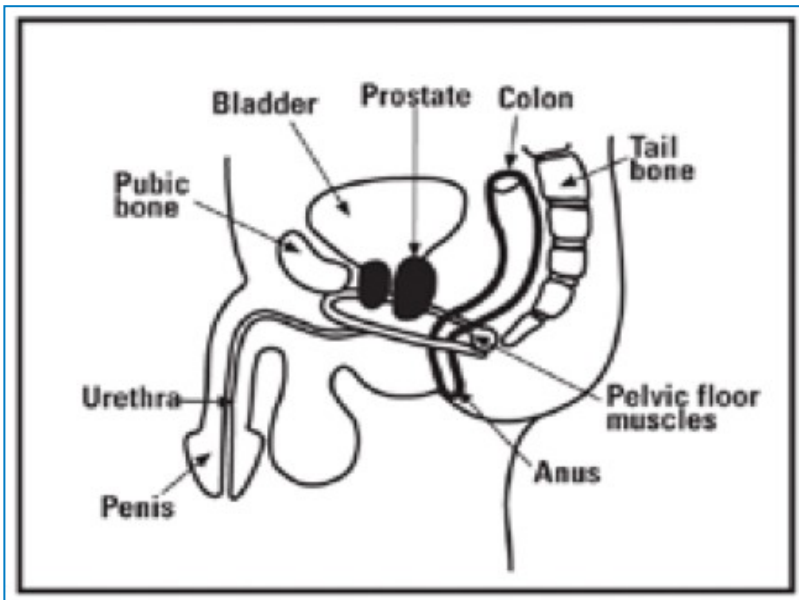
There are 2 layers of muscle—a superficial layer and a deeper layer.

Like any other muscle in the body, these muscles can become weak and may contribute to bladder, bowel and sexual symptoms in men.

Pelvic floor muscles also consist of two muscle types—slow fibres and fast fibres

Pelvic floor muscle exercises have been shown to improve symptoms of—

- Stress urinary incontinence,
- Urge incontinence
- Post-micturition dribble,
- Faecal incontinence
- Erectile dysfunction



How to work your pelvic floor muscles

The first step is learning the correct technique to contract the pelvic floor muscles.

Try to tighten your pelvic floor by 'thinking about stopping the flow of urine' or 'lifting your penis up towards your abdominals'.

You should feel your scrotum lift and the base of the penis pull back

In order to recruit both different muscle fibre types, this exercise needs to be done both slowly and also with fast repetitions.

Start with getting a good technique and aim to hold for up to 10 seconds, 10 times, 3 times per day. This will start to work the slow muscle fibres.

Make sure that you do not hold your breath or 'brace downwards'.

In addition, lift up your pelvic floor muscles 10 times strongly and quickly, to recruit the fast fibres. These will help you if you have leakage when you cough, sneeze, laugh or lift.

Your anal sphincter muscles

Part of the pelvic floor muscle group includes the ring of anal sphincter muscle that surrounds your back passage.

This has to work dynamically to hold in wind or a bowel motion, but it also needs to release to allow a bowel motion to be passed when appropriate.

Think of tightening your back passage as if you are trying to stop yourself passing wind.

Do not squeeze your buttocks or hold your breathe. Hold for 5-10 seconds, release.

Repeat this 10 times slowly, and 10 fast, 3 times/ day.

Both of these exercises need to be done daily for 3-4 months to start to see changes in control.

The quality of the contraction is more important than the quantity. Make sure that you release the muscle fully in between contractions.

Start in lying and then progress to being able to do in sitting, standing or walking.

The knack

The pelvic floor can be under stress with coughing, sneezing, laughing, lifting or even just standing up out of a chair.

Learn to pull up your pelvic floor BEFORE doing any of the above activities to help give it support from underneath.

This is called 'The knack' and with enough repetitions, it should become an automatic contraction as you function in your day to day activities.

General bladder and bowel advice

1. Be aware of your fluid intake.

It is important that you do not limit your fluid intake. It is normal to drink approx. 1.5 litres of fluid/ day. Certain drinks e.g. tea, coffee, fizzy drinks and alcohol may increase frequency and urgency of urination.

Try to drink water and be aware of any drinks that affect your bladder.

2. Normal frequency of passing urine is approx. 5-8 times/day and 1-2 times/ night.

This does vary with age and conditions. If you are reporting increased frequency of urination, your physiotherapist may ask you to fill out a 'bladder and bowel' diary.

This can help to identify any patterns, triggers, fluid intake issues. Advice can be given on helping you take control of your bladder and bowel.

3. Increased frequency of passing urine or an increased feeling of urgency to pass is called 'urge incontinence'.

Try tightening your pelvic floor muscles several times before passing urine to see if you can control the urge. Other helpful techniques can be to count to 10, sing, take a deep breath, do a task or even to cross your legs.

4. Try to avoid constipation.

Chronic constipation can lead to a regular 'bearing down' on the pelvic floor and contribute to weakness of the muscles.

Increasing your water and fibre intake , and having a good defaecation technique can help with this issue.

Please contact the Pelvic Floor Centre if you are uncertain about any of your exercises or would like further advice on the above.

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