

# Pelvic Floor Guide

ROCK MY  
MEN♀PAUSE

Up to a third of all women experience a problem with their pelvic floor muscles at some time during their life.

Pelvic floor problems might not be the most obvious menopause symptom, but they can be aggravated during menopause. Pelvic floor exercises are important to women's health at any age, but especially so during menopause.

The pelvic floor muscles lie across the base of your pelvis and keep the pelvic organs – bladder, uterus and bowel – in the correct position. They should be kept strong and active just like any other muscle in your body.

The most common problems with pelvic floor are leaking with activity, sneezing or coughing and pelvic organ prolapse.

## Doing your pelvic floor exercises

### Finding your pelvic floor muscles

It is important to get the right muscles working in the right way. In a comfortable lying or sitting position imagine that you are trying to stop yourself from passing wind and urine at the same time; drawing the pelvic floor muscles upwards and forwards from the back passage towards the bladder. You may feel a lifting up and tightening as your muscles contract. Try not to hold your breath; breathe in through your nose, drawing air to the bottom of your lungs and letting your tummy relax, then breathe out through your mouth. You could also try counting out loud to encourage normal breathing.

Your lower tummy may tighten, which is normal, but keep your buttocks and legs relaxed. Let your pelvic floor muscles relax fully after every contraction.



## Show us your #PelvicFloorFace

There are 3 main ways to check if you are contracting your pelvic floor muscles correctly:

- 1 Using a mirror, the area between your vagina and back passage (perineum) should move up and inwards away from the mirror when you contract your pelvic floor muscles. If you see any bulging – STOP, you may make your pelvic floor muscle problem worse. You should try to get help from a specialist physiotherapist
- 2 Feel inside your vagina with your thumb or index finger. Tighten your pelvic floor muscles. You should feel the muscles tightening around your thumb or finger
- 3 If you are sexually active, you could try to squeeze your muscles during sex. Ask if your partner can feel the squeeze

**If you experience pain when exercising the pelvic floor muscles, or if you have abdominal or pelvic pain after doing the exercises, you should seek specialist advice from a physiotherapist.**



This document has been produced by E4H and in collaboration with the organisation Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy (POGP) and adapted from the POGP Pelvic Floor Muscles Guide for Women. Reproduced with permission of POGP ([pogp.csp.org.uk](http://pogp.csp.org.uk))

[RockMyMenopause.co.uk](http://RockMyMenopause.co.uk) #RockMyMenopause @RockMyMenopause RockMyMenopause @RockMyMenopause

Rock My Menopause is a campaign of the Primary Care Women's Health Forum, a group of 10,000 healthcare professionals with a special interest in women's health. We aim to equip people with the information and support they need to become more menopause aware.

# Pelvic Floor Guide

ROCK MY  
MEN♀PAUSE

## Improving your pelvic floor muscles

Pelvic floor muscle exercises (sometimes called Kegels) should include long, held squeezes as well as short, quick squeezes; ensuring that you let the muscle 'go' or 'relax' after each squeeze. You should exercise regularly to help the muscles become stronger and more effective.

### LONG SQUEEZES

- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles, hold them tight, then release and let them fully relax. **How long can you hold the squeeze?**
- Repeat the squeeze and hold until the pelvic floor muscles tire. **How many times can you repeat the squeezes?**

### SHORT SQUEEZES

- Quickly tighten your pelvic floor muscles, then immediately let them go again. **How many times can you do this quick squeeze before the muscles get tired?**
- Always let the muscles fully relax after each squeeze



**Aim to be able to do 10 long squeezes, holding each squeeze for 10 seconds, followed by 10 short squeezes.**

## Remembering to exercise

Try to make your pelvic floor muscle exercises part of a daily routine, doing them at the same time as another activity you already do regularly e.g. brushing your teeth. Try the following suggestions:

- put a reminder on your phone
- try one of the pelvic floor exerciser apps available
- after emptying your bladder, whilst sitting on the toilet (but don't practise by stopping your urine flow)
- take a moment to do them when you go to the gym
- during a regular journey in the car, bus or train

Ideally you will be able to improve your pelvic floor muscles with these exercises. If you are finding it difficult to do these exercises, then it's best to seek advice from a specialist physiotherapist.

## TOP 4 TIPS:



Start with 'little and often' if you find that you can only hold the squeeze for a short time, or only do a few before the muscles tire.



You should do your pelvic floor muscle exercises at least 3 times each day.



Build up your exercise routine gradually over the weeks and months. You should notice an improvement in 3 - 5 months and then keep practising your pelvic floor muscle exercises once a day to maintain the improvement.



As your muscles improve, aim to do your exercises in other positions such as standing up. Eventually you can practise using these muscles whilst doing activities such as walking and bending.



This document has been produced by E4H and in collaboration with the organisation Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy (POGP) and adapted from the POGP Pelvic Floor Muscles Guide for Women. Reproduced with permission of POGP ([pogp.csp.org.uk](http://pogp.csp.org.uk))

[RockMyMenopause.co.uk](http://RockMyMenopause.co.uk) #RockMyMenopause @RockMyMenopause RockMyMenopause @RockMyMenopause

Rock My Menopause is a campaign of the Primary Care Women's Health Forum, a group of 10,000 healthcare professionals with a special interest in women's health. We aim to equip people with the information and support they need to become more menopause aware.