

Are You Doing Kegel Exercises Correctly?

Studies show better results when there has been appropriate instruction by a pelvic floor specialist.

Let's try...

Find a quiet place and lie on your back with your knees and lower legs supported on a few pillows, a low sofa or stool.

Visualize you are in a beautiful and warm environment, like the beach or sunny mountains. What does it smell like? Does it smell like an ocean breeze or sage bush? What does it look like? Do you see the sun sparkling off water? What colors do you see? Do you see a blue sky or pink flowers? What do you hear? Can you hear waves in the background or birds overhead? Slowly relax your body from head to toe. Spend about 10-15 seconds at each body part. Starting with your head, and moving down to your shoulders, elbows, wrists, hands, chest, upper back, abdomen, lower back, hips, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, and feet.

Breathe quietly and gently in through the nose (as if smelling a rose) for 3 to 5 seconds and then out through the back of your mouth (as if fogging a mirror). The abdomen should rise and fall while breathing. Try not to move your shoulders or chest. NEVER hold your breath, air should



always be softly flowing in or out. Breathing should feel comfortable, not forced. Do NOT purse your lips.

Less than 30% of women perform a Kegel exercise effectively.

Visualize the pelvic floor muscle running from the pubic bone in the front to the tailbone in the back like a hammock. It encompasses the urethra, vagina, perineum (the space between the anus and vulva), and anal region. While you're breathing in and out, focus on this area for 1-2 minutes and observe any movements felt while breathing.

You want to notice that as you breathe in gently you feel a little fullness in the area, and while you breathe out that fullness decreases. This can help you locate the correct region to squeeze with the following Kegel.



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KEGEL

Like any exercise, it can be difficult at first to know that you are performing Kegels properly. But with a daily commitment, it becomes instinctive. Here are a few tips:

Which muscles? If you can stop your urination flow mid-stream, you have identified your pelvic floor muscles. That's the most difficult part of the exercise.

Build up to your routine. Performing with an empty bladder, your first goal should be to tighten your pelvic floor muscles for 5 seconds. Then relax them for 5 seconds. Try to do 5 reps on your first day. As you gain confidence from your new routine, aim for 10 seconds at a time, relaxing for 10 seconds between contractions.

Watch outs. Be careful not to flex the muscles in your abdomen, thighs, or buttocks. Also, avoid holding your breath. Breathe freely during the exercises to keep from stressing the rest of your body.

Repeat 3 times a day. Aim for at least 3 sets of 10 repetitions per day.

If you are pregnant, please consult with your physician before starting pelvic floor exercises. This exercise should not be performed when lying on your back when you are pregnant, modify to a recliner or left side-lying.

This handout is not intended to take the place of medical advice. If you are experiencing pelvic floor dysfunction or notice unusual symptoms, please consult your physician. It is recommended that you seek medical advice prior to initiating exercise.

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy
LLUH Outpatient Rehabilitation Center
11406 Loma Linda Drive, West Entrance
Loma Linda, CA 92354
tel (909) 558-6144 fax (909) 558-6002

Ask to make an appointment with the Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist



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