

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises

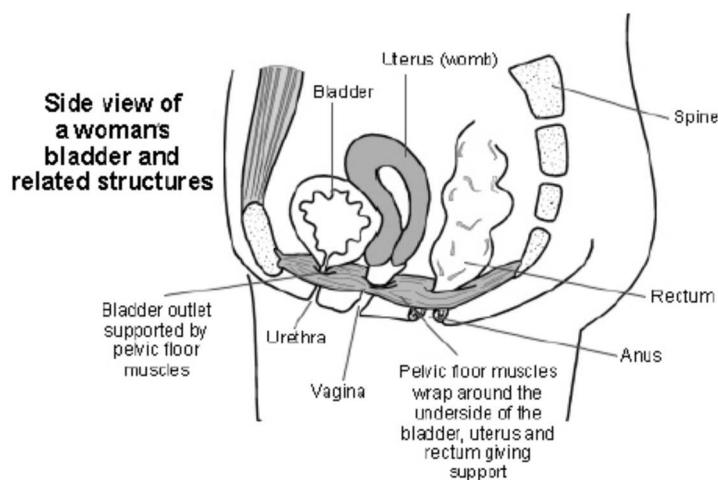
### What are the Pelvic Floor Muscles?

The pelvic floor muscle is rather like a hammock/sling consisting of layers of muscles and ligaments that stretch from the pubic bone at the front to the tailbone (coccyx) at the back.

### What does the Pelvic Floor Muscle do?

- Supports the bladder, womb and bowel, keeping them in the correct position
- Tightly closes your bladder and bowel openings to prevent incontinence
- Helps with sexual function and sensation

The pelvic floor muscles actively squeeze when you cough, sneeze or laugh to prevent leakage. They relax when you go to the toilet to let the urine out and afterwards, they tighten to keep the urine in.



Side view of a woman's pelvic organs and pelvic floor muscles.

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### What happens if the Pelvic Floor Muscles are not working well?

- You may leak urine when you cough, laugh, exercise or exert yourself
- You may have a sudden need to rush to the toilet and leak on the way to the toilet
- You may have leakage of faeces or difficulty controlling wind
- You may have a sensation of a vaginal prolapse (a feeling of aching/heaviness or lowness in the vagina)
- You may experience less satisfaction during intercourse



Repeat this exercise as many times as you can (up to 10 times)

It is often useful to use reminders or “cues” throughout the day. For example, before going to bed, whilst the kettle is boiling, post-it notes on your computer screen, after passing urine etc.

### **How can I use my Pelvic Floor Muscles during the day?**

When you cough, sneeze, laugh or pick something up, remember to tighten your pelvic floor muscle before and during these activities. This technique is called “the knack”. It can be used to try and reduce straining of the pelvic floor muscle and prevent leakage of urine.

### **How will I know if I am getting better?**


It will take several weeks of regular exercise to strengthen your pelvic floor muscle; best results should be seen within 3 to 6 months.

Remember pelvic floor exercises are for life. If you stop doing them your symptoms may return. Training should become part of your daily routine.

### **You can now refer yourself for specialist NHS Physiotherapy**

If you are female and over 16 please call 0300 0040 335 to make an appointment.

### **Useful contact**

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet please contact the Physiotherapy Department on  **Tel. (01803) 655340**

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.