

Progressing your exercises

Pelvic floor muscle exercises can be done anywhere and anytime, but you will find it easier at the start by sitting or lying down. As the muscles improve, aim to do the exercises while standing and even while walking.

And finally

Doing pelvic floor muscle exercises is not a quick fix. A high percentage of women notice an improvement between three to five months into doing them. It is important to continue with these exercises even if they do not seem to be working because they will be making a difference.

Make pelvic floor muscle exercises a part of your daily routine. Please continue with these exercises for the rest of your life!

For further advice, please contact the continence service, your specialist continence nurse or physiotherapist.

Continence Service

To contact CSH Surrey's Continence Service:

T: 01372 384 346

E: CSH.Continence@nhs.net

Your experiences

CSH Surrey is committed to putting people first and continually improving services through listening and responding to feedback. To share your experiences, please:

Call: 020 8394 3846/43

Email: CSH.Feedback@nhs.net

Or write to the Head Office address below.

Large print, audio format or another language

Call 020 8394 3846/43 or email

CSH.Communications@nhs.net to receive this information in large print, audio format or another language.

General enquiries

Visit www.cshsurrey.co.uk for information and contact details for all other CSH Surrey services.

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Pelvic floor muscle exercises for women

Better healthcare together

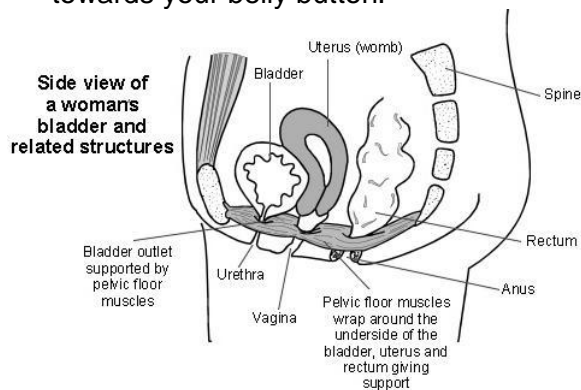
CSH Surrey, providing NHS community nursing and therapy services in the homes, schools, clinics and hospitals in the heart of Surrey since 2006.

What are pelvic floor muscles?

Pelvic floor muscles are layers of muscle stretching like a hammock from the front to the back of the pelvis. They support and hold the bowel, bladder and the womb in place. They need to be strong and work in the right way at the right time for good bladder, bowel and sexual function.

To feel your pelvic floor muscles working

1. Choose a comfortable position while sitting or lying down
2. Make sure your stomach, legs and buttock muscles are relaxed
3. Concentrate on the muscles you would use to stop yourself from passing urine and at the back as if you are trying to stop passing wind
4. You could also think of squeezing tightly inside your vagina
5. It should feel like a 'squeeze' and a 'lift' towards your belly button.



Why should I exercise my pelvic floor muscles?

Weakness of the pelvic floor muscles can be a problem for women of all ages and contribute to problems with bladder or bowel control.

Weak muscles provide inadequate support to pelvic organs and can be made weaker by:

- Not exercising them
- Pregnancy and having babies
- Straining to open your bowels
- Being overweight
- Heavy lifting
- A longstanding cough
- Menopause and growing older.

How often and how many?

Aim to do the exercises at least three times each day, gradually increasing the time you can hold each exercise for and the number you can do.

You need to practice long squeezes as well as short squeezes to fully exercise your pelvic floor muscles.

While doing the exercises:

- Continue to breathe normally
- Do not tighten your buttocks
- Keep your thighs relaxed.

You may feel some gentle tightening in your lower tummy muscles - this is normal.

Long squeezes

Tighten your pelvic floor muscles, up to a maximum of 10 seconds. How long can you hold for?

Repeat this holding exercise until your muscles get tired. How many repetitions can you do?

Short squeezes

Tighten your pelvic floor muscles quickly, for one second, and then relax. Repeat until your muscles get tired. How many short squeezes can you do? These numbers are your 'starting point'.

Most women need to aim for 10 long squeezes, up to 10 seconds each, followed by 10 short squeezes. Gradually try to increase the time you can hold the long squeezes and the number you can do.

Contracting your pelvic floor muscles prior to any lifting, coughing or sneezing helps to support your pelvic organs.

How can I check I'm doing the exercises correctly?

- Use a small mirror to look at the area between your legs. The skin between your vagina and back passage should move upwards and inwards away from the mirror. If you see any bulging – STOP! Please seek further advice as your technique may be wrong
- Feel inside your vagina with your finger or thumb, you should feel the muscles tighten
- If you are sexually active, you could try to squeeze your muscles during sex. Ask if your partner can feel the squeeze.