



FOUR SEASONS WOMEN'S HEALTH

OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY

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Pelvic Floor Therapy

What is it?

The pelvic floor consists of a group of muscles that support and help control the function of the vagina, bladder and rectum. Dysfunction of the pelvic floor muscles can lead to urinary disorders, difficulties with bowel function, vaginal prolapse, pelvic pain and other concerns. Pelvic floor therapy includes a variety of techniques used to treat these problems.

Pelvic floor therapy techniques:

- **Behavioral Modification** – education on diet, fluid intake and other lifestyle changes to enhance pelvic organ function.
- **Bladder Training** – learning to empty the bladder by the clock, rather than by desire.
- **Pelvic Muscle Exercises** – Exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles.
- **Biofeedback** – device used intravaginally to train the pelvic floor muscles to contract or relax correctly.
- **Functional Electrical Stimulation** – device used internally that delivers a weak, painless current to strengthen/relax the pelvic floor muscles and relax an over active bladder muscle.

Pelvic floor therapy usually includes a regimen of four or more visits with a nurse practitioner who has been trained in implementing these techniques. A combination of the above techniques will be used depending on your particular pelvic floor problem

BLADDER IRRITANTS

Alcoholic Beverages

Apples and apple juice

Artificial sweeteners

Cantaloupe

Carbonated beverages

Spicy foods

Caffeine

Citrus fruit and juices

Chocolate

Coffee (including decaffeinated)

Cranberries and cranberry juice

Dairy products

Grapes and grape juice

Pineapple and pineapple juice

Strawberries

Sugar

Tea (except caffeine free herbal tea)

Tomatoes and tomato juice or sauce

Vinegar

KEGEL EXERCISES

Why?

If your pelvic floor is weak, you may experience incontinence or feel pressure from sagging organs. Building up your pelvic muscles with Kegel exercises can help with both bladder control and with bowel control and aid in holding pelvic organs in place.

Where and When? 🕒🕒🕒🕒

Do them four times **each** day!! You will be more likely to remember to do your exercises if you perform them with an activity that you do daily such as mealtimes, bedtime, or driving. It can be helpful to put a sticker somewhere visible to remind you to do your Kegels or set up a reminder alarm on your cell phone.

How???

Your success depends on proper technique. Here's how to locate the proper muscle: imagine you are in a crowded room and don't want to pass gas. Squeeze the same muscle around your rectum that you would squeeze in order to NOT pass gas. **Don't** push, **don't** hold your breath, and **don't** use the muscles in your stomach, legs, or buttocks when doing your Kegel exercises.

Ready, Set, Go →

1. Tighten (contract) the pelvic floor muscle for 5 seconds
2. Relax for 10 seconds. You've now done one exercise.
3. Do a "set" of 5 exercises in a row, four times every day.
4. Increase the contraction time by one second and one repetition every two weeks until you are contracting for 10 seconds and relaxing for 10 seconds.

Keep Going!

It may take you several weeks or months to notice an improvement in your symptoms and pelvic muscle strength, but don't give up! It will get easier as your pelvic floor gets stronger!

HOW TO DO PELVIC MUSCLE EXERCISES

How to Identify the Correct Muscle

To find the proper muscle, imagine having to pass gas while with a group of people. In order not to embarrass yourself, you squeeze the muscles around your rectum to hold the gas back. This is the muscle you want to exercise.

Common Mistakes

Never use your stomach, legs, buttocks, and don't hold your breath. To be sure you are not using your abdominal muscles, place your hand on your abdomen while you squeeze the pelvic floor muscle. If you are feeling your abdomen move, you are also using your stomach muscle.

How to Exercise

When exercising, it is important to squeeze and relax your muscles as prescribed. One work/ rest cycle is one exercise. If, while you exercise, you no longer feel the contraction, the muscle is tired. Stop and rest for a few minutes and then go back to the exercises.

Where to Exercise

These exercises can be done anywhere at any time. If you are doing them properly, your legs, stomach, thighs and buttocks will not move, and no one will know you are doing your exercises. Do the exercises sitting or lying down so you will recognize how to use the muscle in any position in which you may have leakage.

Can These Exercises Harm Me?

NO! These exercises cannot harm you in any way. If you get back or stomach discomfort after you exercise, then you are trying too hard and using extra muscles. Relax, and start over.

PRESCRIBED EXERCISES

Contract the muscle for _____seconds, and then relax for _____seconds (this is one exercise or cycle). Do _____exercises in a row. Repeat this _____times each day (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and bedtime).

Post-therapy Discomfort

If you notice pelvic cramping or discomfort after your pelvic floor therapy session, try using over the counter pain medication such as generic ibuprofen (brand names Motrin or Advil). Also, using heat therapy such as a warm soak in the bathtub or sitting on a heating pad will help relieve post-therapy discomfort.

Other Instructions: _____

PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION EXERCISES

Attached is a group of stretching exercises that can help to relax your pelvic floor muscles. It is recommended that you perform all the exercises 2 x day, holding each pose for 60-90 seconds.

Some of the poses may be difficult due to arthritis or other medical conditions that limit your ability to squat or bend. It is best to avoid poses that cause pain in your knees or parts of your body other than your pelvis. If you have difficulty getting up and down off the floor you can try lying on your bed and stretching.

The medicine ball can be used as a desk chair if you have pain with prolonged sitting at work. This will also help to strengthen your abdominal muscles!

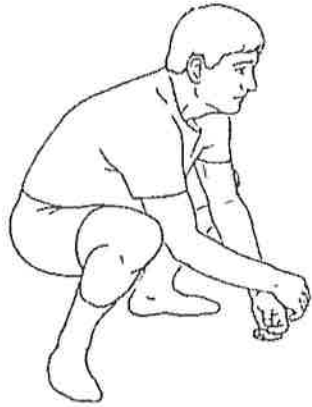
Sitting on a heating pad at a low setting for 20 minutes 2 x day can also help to relax your pelvic floor. Place a towel between your bottom and the heating pad if the temperature feels too warm.

PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION EXERCISES

Instructions: Hold each pose for 60-90 seconds twice a day

PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION - 4 Squat

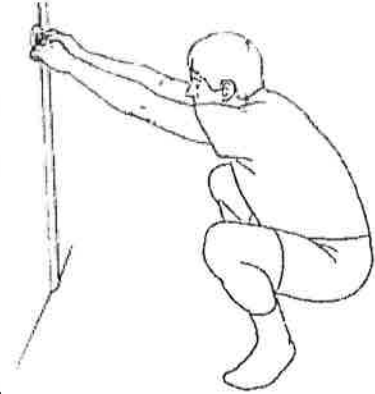
Get into a deep squat. Relax in this position for _____ seconds.



Do _____ times a day.

PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION - 6 Squat, Modified: Door Support

Hold onto closed and sturdy door handle. Slowly sink into deep squat. Relax in this position for _____ seconds.



Do _____ times a day.

PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION - 5 Squat, Modified: Couch Support

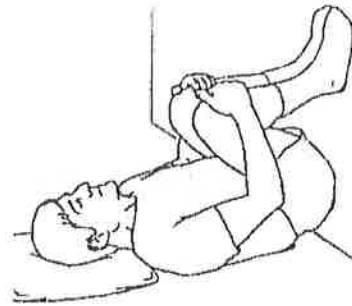
Sit on edge of couch. Slide off edge into a deep squat, allowing couch to support back. Relax in this position for _____ seconds.



Do _____ times a day.

PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION - 9 Squat, Modified: Wall Support

Lie on back with knees to chest. Scoot bottom toward wall. Relax in this position for _____ seconds. Do _____ times a day.



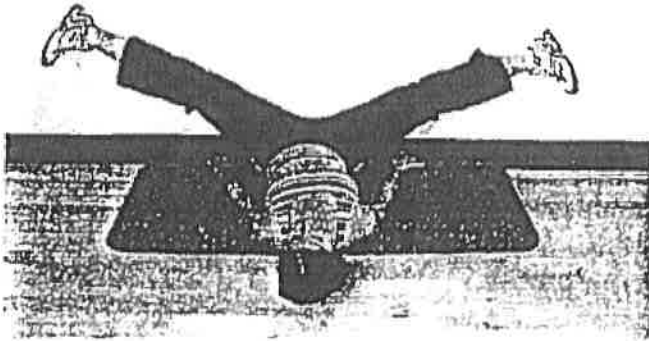
PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION - 10 Forward Bend With Support (Sitting)

Sit on chair with hip level surface in front (bed, table, couch). Angle knees outward. Bend forward onto surface with pillow support. Relax in this position for _____ seconds. Do _____ times a day.



ADDUCTOR STRETCH

- Sit sideways next to a wall
- Spin around and lie down so that the legs are on the wall
- Keep the sacrum flat to the floor
- Hamstring tightness requires further distance from the wall.
- Stretch 60-90 seconds
- Pubic Symphysis instability may require you to perform corrective techniques after this stretch. (Your therapist will advise.)



Other Adductor Stretches



Patient Name: _____

Date: _____

Pelvic Floor Distress Inventory Questionnaire - Short Form 20

Please answer all of the questions in the following survey. These questions will ask you if you have certain bowel, bladder or pelvic symptoms and if you do how much they bother you. Answer each question by putting an X in the appropriate box or boxes. If you are unsure about how to answer, please give the best answer you can. While answering these questions, please consider your symptoms over the last 3 months.

| | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | If yes, how much does it bother you? | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately | Quite a bit |
| 1 Do you usually experience pressure in the lower abdomen? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Do you usually experience heaviness or dullness in the lower abdomen? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Do you usually have a bulge or something falling out that you can see or feel in the vaginal area? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Do you usually have to push on the vagina or around the rectum to have a complete bowel movement? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Do you usually experience a feeling of incomplete bladder emptying? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Do you ever have to push up in the vaginal area with your fingers to start or complete urination? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Do you feel you need to strain too hard to have a bowel movement? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Do you feel you have not completely emptied your bowels at the end of a bowel movement? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Do you usually lose stool beyond your control if your stool is well formed? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Patient Name: _____

Date: _____

| | | If yes, how much does it bother you? | | | |
|----|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately | Quite a bit |
| 10 | Do you usually lose stool beyond your control if you stool is loose or liquid? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Do you usually lose gas from the rectum beyond your control? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Do you usually have pain when you pass your stool? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 | Do you experience a strong sense of urgency and have to rush to the bathroom to have a bowel movement? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 | Does part of your stool ever pass through the rectum and bulge outside during or after a bowel movement? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 | Do you usually experience frequent urination? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 | Do you usually experience urine leakage associated with a feeling of urgency; that is, a strong sensation of needing to go to the bathroom? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 | Do you usually experience urine leakage related to laughing, coughing, or sneezing? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 | Do you usually experience small amounts of urine leakage (that is, drops)? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 | Do you usually experience difficulty emptying your bladder? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 | Do you usually experience pain of discomfort in the lower abdomen or genital region? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |