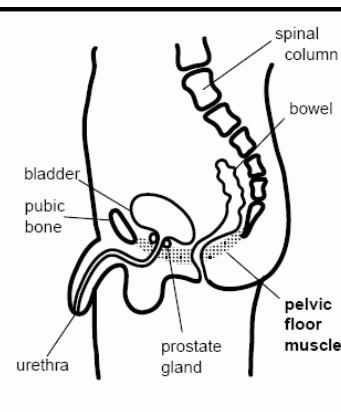


# Exercise Program for Strengthening Pelvic Floor Muscles

Pelvic floor muscle exercises are used to improve bladder and bowel control by strengthening and training the muscles that control retention and evacuation of stool and urine. These are also called "Kegel" exercises. These can be done for men or women. These exercises are helpful for strengthening the pelvic floor muscles prior to radical prostatectomy.



## LOCATING THE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

**MEN & WOMEN:** Pretend you are in a crowded room and you need to pass gas. Squeeze the muscles in your rectum that you use to prevent gas from escaping. If you feel a tightening in your rectum, then you are using the pelvic floor muscles.

**MEN:** Stand naked in front of the mirror and try to raise and lower your penis without using any other part of your body. If you can do this, then you are using your pelvic floor muscles. After prostate surgery, this may not be accomplished as effectively due to the surgery and the recovery period. Sometimes it is hard to locate your pelvic floor muscles especially if they are weak. Do not get discouraged if you do not find them right away. If you are having difficulty locating the pelvic floor muscles you may need to undergo biofeedback training which is a procedure performed in the office.

**IMPORTANT! DO NOT** try to stop the flow of urine or slow it down during urination as a method for locating your pelvic floor muscles. This causes the pelvic floor muscles to contract and over time can cause a person to be unable to completely empty their bladder.

## Exercise Routine #1 Repetitive Squeeze—Mastering the Technique

Once you have located the pelvic floor muscles you are ready to begin a program of regular exercises.

Morning & Bedtime	10 squeezes (lying on right or left side in bed after voiding)
Mid-Morning	10 squeezes
Noon	10 squeezes
Dinner	10 squeezes

You may do these exercises while lying down, standing or sitting. By doing these exercises one to five squeezes at a time in any one position for three weeks, this will develop a habit that will eventually be an automatic response while doing the squeezes.

## Exercise Routine #2 Squeeze/Hold/Rest—Building Strength and Endurance

Perform a gradual squeeze of the pelvic floor muscle and hold for 10 seconds and then relax for 10 seconds. **Do 10 squeeze/hold repetitions 6 different times per day.** Do them in various positions, sitting, lying down, or standing. You may have work into this exercise gradually. If you need to squeeze for less than 10 seconds or rest for longer than 10 seconds than is okay. But the goal is 10 second squeeze followed by 10 second rest. You should rest at least 10 seconds between squeezes to allow your muscles time to relax, otherwise you might teach your muscles to spasm. If you are doing these exercises to treat pain, spasms or constipation, then relaxing between exercises is very important. **After surgery you should gradually build to 10 sets of 10 per day.**

