

Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises strengthen the muscles of the pelvic floor. These muscles are used during urination and sexual intercourse. It is important to exercise these muscles because an exercised muscle can stretch and contract better at the time of birth. After delivery these exercises can strengthen muscles, improve muscle tone and help prevent stress incontinence and prolapsed uterus.

The muscles that stop the flow of urine are the pubococcygeal muscles. Doing Kegel exercises during urination will help you know if you are doing them correctly. If you can stop the stream of urine you are using the correct muscles. After you have located the correct muscles Kegel exercises can be done in following way:

Think of the pelvic floor as a 5 story building. You start on the elevator at the bottom floor and go to the first floor. Hold this for 5 seconds. Go to the second floor and hold again for 5 seconds. Continue this pattern until you reach the 5th floor. Hold for 5 seconds then release each floor slowly. until you reach the bottom floor. Then bear down and push outward with the pelvic muscles. This "elevator" exercise should be done in cycles of 15, 3 times a day.

Exercises should not be done on a regular basis during urination because this may cause urine retention which could lead to urinary tract infection.

Sources:

Holistic Midwifery by Anne Frye

Maternity and Gynecologic Care by Bobak & Jensen

Nurse Midwifery by Helen Varney