

PATIENT INFORMATION

Pelvic Floor Exercises

You are not alone. There are many people who leak urine or faeces when they don't want to or who have some discomfort deep in their pelvis because of a prolapse.

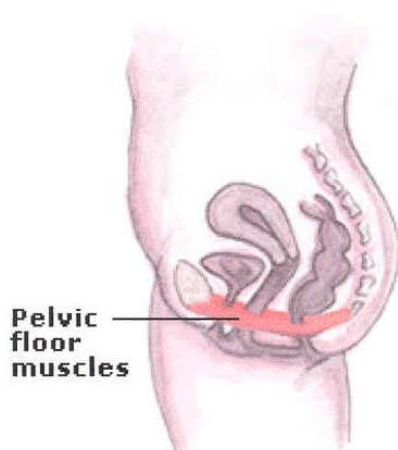
1 in 10 people in this country have problems with their bladder or bowel. It can be very distressing and embarrassing.

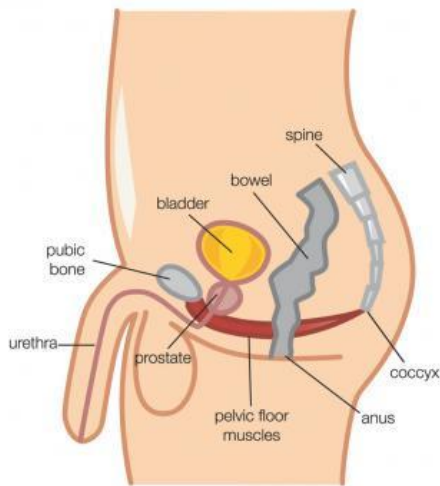
WHERE ARE THE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

The pelvic muscles are just inside your body. They are attached between the bottom of your spine (coccyx) and the bone between your legs (pubic bone).

They support the bladder where urine is stored, the bowel and the uterus (womb) in women. These muscles help to control when you pass urine (wee) and empty your bowels (poo). The muscles should be firm and strong. If they are weak they will not provide the support and control that they should. Weak muscles can also lead to a prolapse in women; or problems maintaining an erection in men.

Some people can have problems with the muscles that are too tight, which can cause other issues, you may need to have your muscles checked by a physiotherapist to see if this is a problem for you.





WHY DO THE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES NOT WORK PROPERLY?

The muscles can be damaged in many ways:

- During pregnancy
- A chronic or smoker's cough
- After childbirth
- Lack of general fitness
- Changes during the menopause and age
- Too much lifting of heavy things
- After prostate surgery
- A history of chronic constipation
- Being overweight

If your pelvic floor is damaged you may leak urine into your underwear when you cough, laugh, sneeze, exercise, blow your nose, lift, bend or stretch.

HOW SHOULD I DO PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE EXERCISES?

Choose any comfortable position, with your knees slightly apart.

Tighten up your back passage as though you are trying to

stop passing wind. Then tighten the muscles that you would use to stop yourself from passing urine. Do these 2 together and you should be exercising the pelvic floor muscles.

IT IS EASY TO USE THE WRONG MUSCLES INSTEAD OF THE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES.

- Don't clench your buttocks
- Don't hold your breath
- Don't squeeze your legs together

It is very important to make sure that you are using the right muscles otherwise there may not be any improvement. You could even cause more damage.

HOW OFTEN AND HOW MANY?

When you have learned the exercises you can do them in a sitting or lying position. Try to do the exercises slow and fast.

Slow exercises

Gradually tighten the muscles and hold while you count to 10. This helps the muscles provide support for your bladder and bowel.

Fast Exercises

Tighten and relax the muscles quickly. This helps the muscles to stop urine leaking when you sneeze, laugh or exercise.

YOU NOW NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE MUSCLES WITH A PELVIC FLOOR WORKOUT.

Build up to doing:

10 slow exercises and 10 fast exercises 4 times a day.

It may take up to 3 months of exercising before you see a full improvement.

You should also tighten your pelvic floor muscles before you cough, sneeze or lift. This can help prevent a leak of urine.

Pelvic floor muscle exercises work best when you are taught by experts.

Ask for help if you are not sure that you are using the right muscles. A specialist physiotherapist or continence nurse advisor can help you. They have a lot of skills in making pelvic floor muscles stronger. We have a dedicated pelvic floor physiotherapy clinic at Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals

Look after your bladder and bowels

- Have at least 8 drinks each day (about 3-4 pints)
- If you smoke, try to stop
- Try to keep to a normal weight
- Eat 5 portions of fibre every day. Fibre can stop you getting constipated
- Don't lift things that are too heavy for you
- Don't try to stop your urine (wee) flow mid stream. It will not exercise the muscles and can cause problems for some people
- Don't go to the toilet too often. Only go when your bladder feels full.

This patient information leaflet is intended to be used to support discussion during your clinical consultation. If there is anything you do not understand or are unsure about, please ask the doctor at your appointment or contact the people below.

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Physiotherapist
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During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Manager/Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

REHABILITATION

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your rehabilitation, please contact the Director of Rehabilitation, on tel no 01704 547471.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Contact your doctor if at any time you are unable to pass urine and have not passed urine for more than 2 hours.

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

Your own GP –

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

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Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ
Tel: (01695) 577111

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FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

Please remember to complete the **attached** *Friends and Family Test*.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to: southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT

Thank you

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