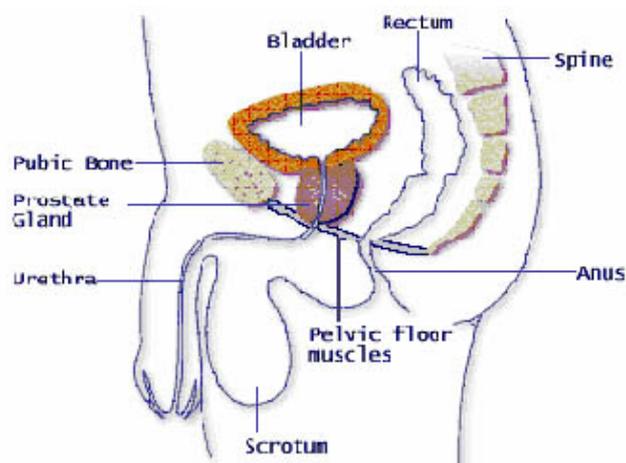


## ***Pelvic Floor Exercises for Men (page 1 of 3)***

### **What is the pelvic floor?**

The pelvic floor is a strong 'sling' or 'hammock' of muscles that help to support the bladder and the bowel. The muscles stretch from the pubic bone in the front to the coccyx at the back.



In men, the pelvic floor has two openings.

1. one for the urethra, the small tube that carries urine from the bladder.
2. one for the bowel.

### **Why is it important to keep the pelvic floor healthy by doing exercises?**

The pelvic floor supports the contents of your lower abdomen. A healthy pelvic floor is especially important when doing any form of exercise, even walking. The pelvic floor holds the bladder in place and the urethra tightly closed. When you need to pass urine the muscles relax and after the flow has finished will tighten again. If the muscles become weak or over stretched, you may leak small amounts of urine when you cough, stretch or sneeze.

Common causes of pelvic floor weakness are:

- prostate surgery
- constipation and constantly straining to empty your bowels
- having a chronic cough
- doing a lot of heavy lifting
- being generally unfit
- being overweight.

### **How to do pelvic floor exercises**

First you need to identify the muscles. To do this you will need to concentrate carefully at first. Once you have located the muscle the

If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: [customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk)

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: [www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily](http://www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily) or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

exercises can be done anytime and anywhere. Sit on a firm seat with your feet flat on the floor. Imagine you are trying to stop yourself passing urine and pull up on the muscle you use to do this. You should feel your testicles lift and your penis shorten a little. **No other muscles should move.** Next, imagine you are trying to stop yourself breaking wind and pull in the back passage. When you have identified these two areas of the muscle try squeezing the two parts of the muscle together. This will lift the whole 'sling' of muscle at the same time. Then relax. To exercise this muscle you need to lift the muscle slowly and steadily, pulling it tighter and tighter and tighter. It may help to picture this muscle as a lift, which is rising from the ground floor, to the first, then second, and then third floor. When you reach the 'third floor' hold the muscle there – count to a maximum of 10 (imagine people are leaving the lift), and then gradually relax the muscle and let the lift go slowly down to the ground floor again, and relax. You should aim to repeat the exercise five times. This will make up one exercise session.

You should aim for five sessions a day to help build up the muscle. In order to remember to do this regularly, it is often helpful to link the exercises to something you do regularly each day – such as visits to the toilet - and then take a few minutes after each visit to do the exercises.

When you have mastered these exercises it is helpful to do another type of exercise which works other muscle fibres in the pelvic floor. These are often referred to as 'fast twitch' exercises. These are done by contracting and relaxing the pelvic floor in quick succession 10 times two or three times daily as you can. We sometimes describe these exercises as 'lift and drop'.

### Remember

- keep breathing normally throughout the exercises – Do not hold your breath
- do not push down when you are squeezing
- try not to tighten your tummy, buttocks or thighs
- do not pull your knees together.

At the beginning, take your time to do the exercises properly. It is the quality of the exercises that is important and it will take a while before you notice any improvement.

Perseverance with the exercises does pay off.

### Promoting a healthy pelvic floor

- do not 'put off' opening your bowels once you have the urge to do so
- avoid constipation and straining when opening your bowels
- avoid bad habits such as going to the toilet 'just in case' as in the end this will cause your bladder to reduce in capacity and mean you will need to empty your bladder more often
- aim to keep your weight within the right range for your height
- keep a good fluid intake but avoid too many caffeine laden drinks such as tea, coffee

and cola, as they can irritate the bladder and make it more difficult to 'hold on'

- seek medical advice for anything which may be contributing to the problem such as a chronic cough.

### **Further help and advice**

If you need further help or advice with these exercises please contact:

Continence Advisors - Elizabeth Rice, Karen Redgrove, Sandy McNeilly  
Central Health Clinic, Avon Approach, Salisbury,  
Tel: 01722 323196

or

Urology Nurses – Daphne Phillips, Kate Chadwick, Sandie Townsend  
Department of Urology, Salisbury District Hospital, Salisbury, SP2 8BJ  
Tel: 01722 336262 Ext 4866 (Answerphone)

