

Kegel Exercises

[Kegel exercises](#) are designed to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles (also called your [PC muscles](#)). Kegel exercises can be good for men who are experiencing incontinence as well as in preparation for prostate surgery that might result in incontinence. It is important to maximize the strength of these muscles prior to prostatectomy to optimized urinary control post-operatively.

Start by locating your PC muscle.

Many people begin doing kegel exercises but are actually squeezing the wrong muscle. Before you start the exercises, [find your PC muscle](#), make sure you know where your PC muscle is and what it feels like. Here are two tips to finding your PC muscle:

-- The easiest way to find your PC muscle is to stop the flow of urine while you are urinating. As you are voiding, intentionally stop the flow of urine. Do this several times until you can clearly feel the muscle you are using to stop the flow. This muscle is your PC muscle.

-- You can also check you've got the right muscle by inserting a finger (for women in the vagina, for men in the anus) and squeezing your PC muscle. If you feel pressure around your finger, you're using the right muscle.

Squeezing kegel exercises: start slow, find your baseline.

The basic exercise can be done anytime and anywhere. Just squeeze your PC muscles as hard as you can, and hold them. This is doing a kegel exercise. Start by squeezing and holding for a count of 3-5 seconds, then release and relax for 5 seconds. When you release, notice how your muscles feel. The first time you do a kegel exercise see how many times you can do it before you feel your muscles getting tired.

Squeezing kegel exercises: use sets of repetitions

Your kegel exercises will be most efficient and have the most impact if you get into doing sets of repetitions of the squeezing. Once you've found your baseline, you can work from there. If you can, start with doing 5 repetitions (squeeze/hold/release). Judge for yourself how long you can hold the squeeze for, but don't push yourself too much at first.

Building up strength with kegel exercises.

Once you've found your baseline, do your exercises, and every couple of days increase both the length of time you hold the squeeze for, and the number of exercises per set. As a guideline, try to work up to a point where you can hold the squeeze for ten seconds. And try to work up to doing ten reps of kegel exercises per set. So you squeeze, hold for ten second, release, relax for ten seconds, and repeat ten times.

Do your kegel exercises three or four times a day.

Try to take three or four times in the day to do kegel exercises. Again, everyone is different, but as a guideline try to do ten reps per session, holding for ten seconds on each exercise.

Vary the intensity and time in kegel exercises.

You can also try to vary the intensity of your squeezing and the amount of time you hold the squeeze in a set. Once you're comfortable that you're doing the exercises properly try a set where you do rapid squeeze and release. Experiment with how long you can comfortably hold a squeeze. Remember not to push yourself to the point of pain or discomfort.

Tips:

1. **Isolate the PC muscle when doing your kegel exercises.** Avoid contracting your abdominal, thigh, or buttocks muscles, or squeezing your sphincter muscle only. This is something many people do, but it reduces the effectiveness of the kegel exercise. Concentrate on breathing and trying to keep yourself relaxed, and only tense the PC muscles you are using. Try not to tense up your whole body.
2. **Finding time to do your kegel exercises.** You don't need to set aside a big chunk of time to do kegel exercises. Do a few reps while waiting for a stop light to turn green. In the last ten minutes before lunch, when you're sitting at a desk, do a few reps. Do them while you're waiting for the movie to start, or a commercial break to be over.
3. **Don't overdo your kegel exercises.** Like any exercise, it's important to build up slowly, and pay attention to your body. If you are experiencing pain or discomfort, you are pushing yourself too hard. It is possible that you could strain the muscles and aggravate a current problem, when you are trying to resolve it.