



Kegel Exercises

**WHY, HOW
& WHAT ?**

What is a Kegel Exercise?

Kegels are exercises you can do to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles, which support the uterus, bladder & bowel. You can do Kegel exercises discreetly just about anytime, whether you're driving in your car, sitting at your desk or relaxing on the couch.

How Do I Do Them?

Start with an empty bladder. Imagine that you're trying to stop yourself from passing gas and trying to stop the flow of urine midstream at the same time. The feeling is one of "squeeze and lift" - a closing and drawing up of the front and back passages.

Make sure that you're squeezing and lifting without pulling in your tummy, squeezing your legs together, tightening your buttocks, or holding your breath. In other words, only your pelvic floor muscles should be working.

Though you may have trouble isolating these muscles at first, it gets easier with practice.

How to do them cont...

If you haven't been doing Kegels, start by holding each contraction for a few seconds before releasing, and relax for a few seconds after each one. As your muscles get stronger, you will want to work up to holding each Kegel for 10 seconds, then relaxing for 10 seconds after each one.

How Often Should I Do Them?

Start doing Kegels a few at a time throughout the day. As your muscles start to feel stronger, gradually increase both the number of contractions you do each day and the length of time you hold each contractions, up to ten seconds. Do them in sets of ten and try to work up to three or four sets about three times a day.

Make Kegels part of your daily routine. Be patient and keep at it. It may take 8 to 12 weeks of regular Kegels before you notice an improvement. For some women the improvement is dramatic. For others it may simply keep problems from getting any worse.

How Long Should I Continue Doing Kegels?

Don't stop doing Kegels! You have to continue the exercise to maintain your strength and ward off incontinence as you age. So make doing Kegels a lifelong habit.

Working to keep your pelvic floor muscles strong may also help guard against pelvic organ prolapse, a common condition among older women.



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