



# Pelvic floor exercises

## Information for women

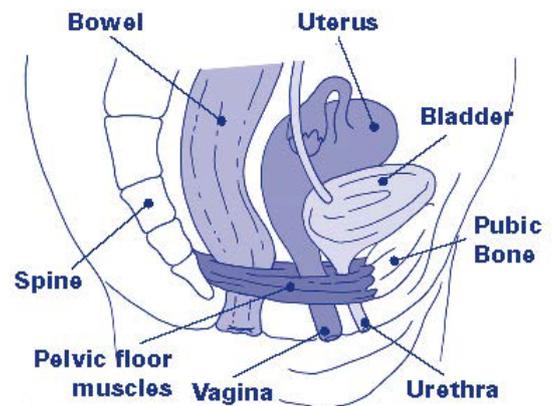
### Pelvic floor exercises for women

'Tighten, squeeze, lift and relax'. This describes pelvic floor exercises that help to improve bladder, bowel and sexual function after having a baby. Make these quick and easy exercises part of your daily routine during and after pregnancy.

### What is your pelvic floor?

The pelvic floor is a sheet of muscles and ligaments that extend from your backbone (coccyx) to your pubic bone at the front. This helps to support – your bladder, womb and bowel and to tighten the bladder outlet and back passage.

When you have your baby, the pelvic floor muscles become stretched and can cause problems. This is why exercising the pelvic floor muscles during and after pregnancy can help you to get back into shape.



### How do pelvic floor exercises work?

Exercising prevent common pelvic floor problems, for example, leakage of urine when laughing, coughing, lifting or sneezing. Urine leakage should be occasional; if persistent see your GP.

**The good news** is that pelvic floor exercises are easy to perform and with practice can be performed anywhere and anytime. The more you exercise your pelvic floor muscles the closer you will get to maintaining or restoring their strength.

Once we have confirmed that your bladder function is within normal limits, you will be discharged and able to return home and continue as normal.



## What happens if I am not able to pass urine?

Please do not worry as this is usually a short-term problem. We will re-catheterise you and arrange for our specialist nurse to see you at home to teach you intermittent self-catheterisation.

If you have not been contacted within 48 hours please contact Burstow Ward. We will give you an appointment with one of our consultants in the urogynaecology clinic. This will be arranged for two weeks after your TWOC.

## How to do pelvic floor exercises

**There are two types of exercises: Short and long**

Pick a time and something you do regularly, e.g., brushing your teeth or making a drink.

**Short exercise:** Start the short exercises by pulling up your back passage, as if you are stopping yourself from passing wind. Add a squeeze towards the front around your vagina and bladder, as if stopping the flow of urine. Let go straight away. This is a short squeeze of no more than one or two seconds. Try to perform the pelvic floor exercises about 10 times at each session. Rest for one to two seconds between each pull up. Make sure that you aren't squeezing your buttocks, or holding your breath to squeeze.

Follow on with the **long exercises:** This exercise is the same method but a longer hold to the count of 10. This exercise should be repeated 5 times.

Complete the short and long exercises 3 times a day. This will help you to control your bladder when you cough, laugh or sneeze. Keep your exercises going for at least 3 months and you will slowly regain adequate or full-strength muscle tone.

A healthy lifestyle will also help keep your weight under control and regain your pre-pregnancy shape more quickly. Try to include drinking 6-8 glasses of water a day.

Continue pelvic floor exercises once a day (instead of three times a day) after six weeks if a difference has been noticed.

Pelvic floor exercises are beneficial for a woman's lifetime.

## Questions?

If you have problems doing the exercises described here or they don't seem to be working after six weeks, seek help from your doctor, midwife or health visitor. Like any exercise programme, it requires dedication, time and routine. Have faith in your daily pelvic floor muscle exercises and you should begin to see results.

### For further advice and information, contact:

Royal college of Midwives (RCM) - [www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk)

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) - [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)

NCT - [www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)

## Contact us

### Burstow Ward

East Surrey Hospital  
Redhill Surrey RH1 5RH  
Tel: 01737 768 511 x6316 / x1653  
[www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk](http://www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk)

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 01737 231 958

Email: [pals@sash.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@sash.nhs.uk)

Write to: PALS, East Surrey Hospital  
Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH

You can also ask a member of staff to contact PALS on your behalf.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats, including larger text. Contact the PALS office for help.