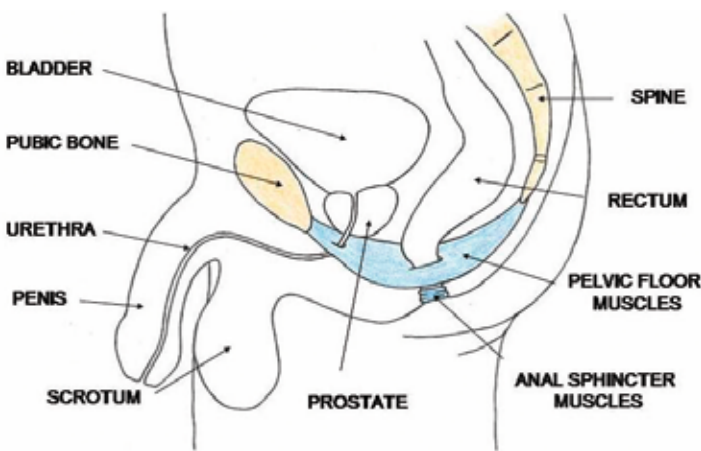


Pelvic floor exercises for men

A patient's advice sheet

What is the pelvic floor?

The pelvic floor consists of a 'sling' of muscles running from the front at the pubic bone, between the legs, to the bottom of the backbone. These muscles help support the pelvic organs, such as the bladder and bowel.



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Why does it need exercising?

Although less common in men than women these muscles can become weakened, especially with repeated coughing or following prostate surgery. If weakened sudden stress on the bladder (such as coughing, laughing or sneezing) may cause you to leak urine or pass wind. This is often called stress incontinence. Many people are too embarrassed to discuss this with anyone and think it is a natural (irreversible) part of ageing and/or their illness and do not realise it is treatable and can be helped with pelvic floor exercises.

How to exercise your pelvic floor

Like any muscles the pelvic floor needs exercising to improve its strength.

First you need to find your pelvic floor muscles. Although these exercises are easy to do in any position you may find it easier to begin lying on your back with your knees bent up or sitting on the toilet.

Tighten the muscles around your front and back passage and lift up, as if you are stopping yourself passing water and wind at the same time. The movement is an upward and inward contraction, not a bearing-down effort.

A quick way of finding the right muscles is by trying to stop the flow of urine when you are using the toilet. Do not do this more than once a fortnight because you may start retaining urine.

If you are doing the exercise correctly you should feel or see your penis move up slightly towards your abdomen and your scrotum lift.

- Do not hold your breath. You should be able to hold a conversation at the same time, or try counting aloud while you are doing the exercises.
- Do not tighten tummy, thigh or buttock muscles. (A gentle tightening of the lower part of your tummy muscles is normal.)
- Do not squeeze your legs together.
- Do not raise your shoulders, toes or eyebrows.