

## Gynaecology Department

# Gynaecology: Pelvic Floor Exercises for Women

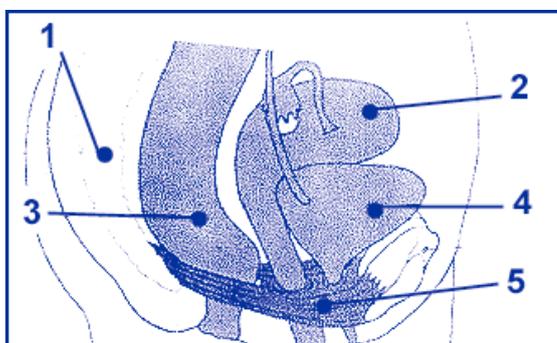
### Information for patients

The pelvic floor muscles run from the pubic bone at the front of the pelvis between your legs to the tail bone at the back of the pelvis.

They form a sling to support the bladder, vagina, uterus (if you have one) back passage and bowel. They also keep the openings (urethra, vagina and anus) tightly closed.

A number of things can cause these muscles to become weak including: childbirth, lifestyle, being overweight, smoking, prolonged straining to empty your bowels, the menopause, persistent cough, repeated heavy lifting. This may cause you to leak or dribble or feel you have less control over your bladder.

It is very important to do pelvic floor exercises everyday to maintain their strength and support they give to:



1. The spine
2. The uterus (womb)
3. The rectum
4. The bladder
5. The pelvic floor muscles



## Patient Information

### **How to do a pelvic floor exercise**

These can be done in any position, therefore choose what is comfortable for you:

- Keep the rest of your body as relaxed as possible, imagine you are trying to stop yourself passing wind 'squeeze and let go'.
- Imagine you are trying to stop yourself passing urine 'squeeze and let go'
- Now put them together. The feeling is one of squeeze and lift closing and drawing up the back and front passages.

### **There are two ways of working these muscles and you should do each three times per day:**

- Squeeze, lift and hold for as long as you can and let go. In time and with practice the number of seconds you can hold will increase as will the number of holds you can do. In this way the stamina and strength of these muscles will increase.
- Squeeze, lift and quickly let go. Repeat this up to a maximum of ten times.

If you are not sure if you are 'squeezing the right bit', try and stop passing urine midstream. You may only reduce the flow but the squeezing feeling down below is your pelvic floor muscle working. **Do not do this every time you pass urine as it may lead to problems emptying your bladder.**

If you do not use the right muscles when performing the exercises, you may not experience any improvements.

Try to avoid: holding your breath, tightening the tummy, thigh or buttock muscles, squeezing your legs together and raising your shoulders, toes or eyebrows.

There is also a phone app you can use called Squeesy. This app supports people with pelvic floor muscle exercise

Squeesy comes pre-set with an exercise plan

## Patient Information

Recommended by pelvic health physiotherapists

All you need to do is set your reminders so you can easily remember to do your exercises

Remembering to do the exercises can be difficult. To help with this try any of the following:

- Set an alarm on your mobile/ watch / Squeezy app
- Exercise when waiting for a kettle to boil
- When washing your hands

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### Document History

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