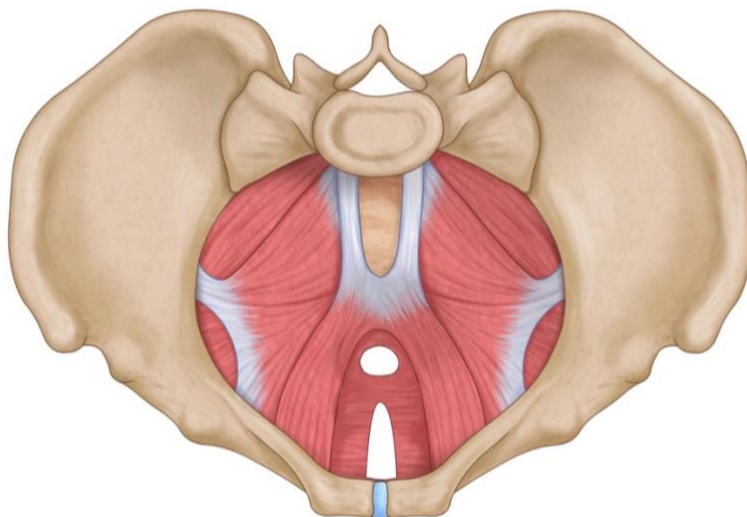


Pelvic Floor Strengthening Exercises

At-Home Routine for Women & Men



If you're suffering with a weak pelvic floor, incontinence, prolapse, or poor ejaculatory control, you need to strengthen a group of muscles called the levator ani. These muscles are commonly damaged during childbirth, but with age and atrophy, problems can arise in both men and women, particularly those in the second half of life.

Obviously, you can't lift weights with your pelvic floor the way you might with your biceps, but by increasing awareness and coordination, your levator ani muscles begin to fire and engage naturally when you get up and down, use the toilet, and move around in your daily life. Through this simple process, your pelvic floor muscles can restore their strength and tone.

SAFETY DISCLAIMER - if you have a major pelvic floor dysfunction, please check with a health care provider before practicing any self-care routine.

Feel Your Pelvic Floor Muscles

Since most of us have never consciously engaged or coordinated the muscles of our pelvic floor, an important first step is to spend a few minutes exploring this region through a series of engage-relax exercises targeting three areas: front, back, and middle.

Front Awareness

- Sit in a chair and close your eyes
- Inhale deeply 1-2-3-4, now exhale 4-3-2-1
- At the bottom of the exhale, imagine you are urinating, and then stop the flow of urine and hold

Back Awareness

- Inhale deeply 1-2-3-4, now exhale 4-3-2-1
- At the bottom of the exhale, squeeze your anus tightly

Middle Awareness

- Inhale deeply 1-2-3-4, now exhale 4-3-2-1
- Men, at the bottom of the exhale, imagine you were lifting your testicles up into your body
- Women, at the bottom of the exhale, contract your vagina

All Three Together

- Inhale deeply 1-2-3-4, now exhale 4-3-2-1
- At the bottom of the exhale, squeeze your front, back, and middle areas at the same time

NOTE: when attempting to contract your pelvic floor muscles, it's common to struggle to hold the contraction. The muscle might contract-relax-contraction, meaning you cannot hold it—that's normal. It will improve with time.



Seated Pelvic Floor Exercise

- Sit in a chair with a rolled-up towel between your legs, touching your genitals and the base of your pelvis
- Inhale deeply, and then exhale completely—and hold
- Engage all your pelvic floor muscles (front, back and middle), lift and squeeze for 1-2-3-4-5
- Release, relax and breathe normally
- Repeat for two more rounds

NOTE: you can practice this exercise without a towel, but using one helps to create greater awareness in this area.



Supine Pelvic Floor Exercise

- Lie on the floor with your knees bent and a block between your knees
- Inhale deeply, and then exhale completely—and hold
- Engage all your pelvic floor muscles (front, back and middle), lift and squeeze for 1-2-3-4-5
- Release, relax and breathe normally
- Repeat for two more rounds

How Often to Practice?

Practice versions of these exercises three times a day—but no more. If you overdo it, it can cause short term constipation and anxiety.

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