

Pelvic floor exercises: tailored to you

This reference sheet is for patients who have seen the physiotherapist and are working out a programme of exercises to suit their abilities.

Slow exercises to improve strength and power

Sit, stand or lie with your knees comfortably apart. Gradually tighten and pull up the muscles **as firmly as you can** and see how long you can hold for (up to 10 seconds). Rest for at least the same time as you squeeze. Make sure you're starting at the back as though you're stopping wind.

Write the time you can hold for here:

Repeat this tightening and resting until you can feel the muscles getting tired.

Write the number of slow holds you can do here:

Firm and strong exercises to improve co-ordination and power

Squeeze the muscles up as **firmly, strongly and as quickly as you can (like a 'snatching' sensation)**. Then let go immediately. Repeat this until you feel the muscles getting tired.

Write the number of quick squeezes you can do here:

Repeat **both** of these exercises every day as often as you and the physiotherapist have agreed.

Write the number of repetitions to aim for each day here:

Long 'half-holds' to improve endurance (staying power)

Tighten the muscles **only slightly or with a third of the effort and try to hold for longer than the slow exercises**. Rest for at least 10 seconds.

Write the time you can hold for here:

Repeat this holding and resting until the muscles get tired and do this regularly throughout the day especially when standing, walking and other daily activities in an upright position.

The knack: an exercise to reinforce your pelvic floor muscles during sudden actions

Be aware of your pelvic floor muscles and squeeze them as hard as you can before and during lifting, coughing, laughing and sneezing. This automatic response is often reduced when your muscles are weak.

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