

# Exercise the FLOOR of your CORE

## How to do Kegel exercises

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### **EVERYONE HAS ONE**

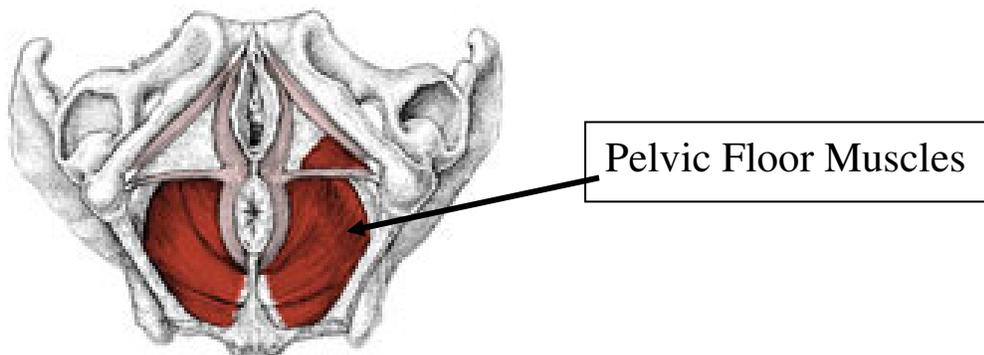
The pelvic floor muscles support the organs and increase core stability. These muscles are under voluntary control and respond to exercise just as the biceps and quadriceps muscles. All adults should have good ability to contract and relax the pelvic floor muscles.

### **WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF THE MUSCLES ARE WEAK?**

Pelvic muscle weakness can result in back or leg pain, urine leakage or pelvic organ prolapse. Sometimes weakness is not evident for several years. You may not realize the muscles are weak until you check them. Exercises can be helpful at any age.

### **HOW DO I FIND THE MUSCLES?**

The pelvic floor muscles are inside the pelvis and somewhat difficult to see and feel. It is important to identify the correct contraction. It is very hard to describe – it must be discovered. The best verbal description is: You are in a small room with a lot of important people and do not want to release gas. Hold back the gas.



## IDEAS TO CHECK YOURSELF

1. Look at the perineum in a mirror and watch the area move upward and inward toward your head.
2. Place your finger lightly on the outside of the anus. Feel the tissue move inward as you contract the muscles.
3. Place your finger inside the vagina – touch a sidewall and feel the muscle contraction pulling in and upward toward your head.
4. FOR MEN – The elephant exercise - Stand in front of the mirror after your shower and watch the penis upward move as you contract your muscles.

## HOW MANY SHOULD I DO?

It is best to individualize exercises based on vaginal palpation. Below is a place to start. Easy and moderate exercises are done lying down. Hard exercises are done sitting.

	Hold	Rest	Reps
Easy	2-3 seconds	5 seconds	10 3 x/ day
Mod	5 seconds	10 seconds	20 2x/ day
Hard	10 seconds	10 seconds	30 1x/day

It is very important to **focus** on the exercises, do not drive or watch TV while doing them. Your muscle should feel tired after exercising. It is also important to relax completely between contractions. Too much tension can cause muscle spasm and pain.

## WHAT IF EXERCISES DON'T HELP?

Physical therapy can be very helpful in rehabilitation of the muscles. Machines can show you the muscle contraction and increase effectiveness of the exercises. Bladder training and abdominal exercise may also be added to increase the results.

Ask your doctor for a prescription to attend physical therapy.  
Or Call Beth Shelly Physical Therapy 563-940-2481