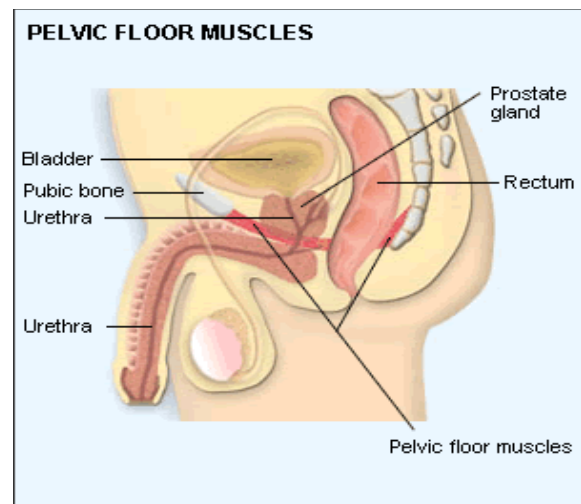


PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISE

The male pelvic floor is positioned at the base or lower opening of the pelvis in and around where a man sits. The pelvic floor is designed as a supportive hammock consisting of the pelvic floor muscles, nerves, blood vessels and strong connective tissues. The male pelvic floor slings from the pubic bone at the front underneath the body to the lower margin of the tailbone (coccyx) at the back and between the bones you sit on from side to side. The male genitals are situated below the level of the pelvic floor.

The pelvic floor performs three main roles but the one we are most concerned with is the control and emptying of the bladder at this stage.

- Control and emptying of the bladder and bowel.
- Support for the pelvic organs (bladder and rectum).
- Sexual function –maintaining an erection.



MALE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

Male pelvic floor muscles sit in layers within the pelvic floor. They consist of two different types of muscle fibres; fast twitch and slow twitch. The slow twitch fibres are the most predominant and these work constantly to maintain support and control. Fast twitch fibres contract quickly to prevent urinary leakage.

SYMPTOMS OF MALE PELVIC FLOOR DYSFUNCTION

- Inability to control flow of urine with increased pressure (lifting, sneezing, coughing)
- Leakage of urine when you have a strong urge to empty your bladder
- Loss of urine following voiding (post void dribble)
- Inability to stop or slow the stream of urine once you have started to void
- Lack of control over passing wind and or bowel movements
- Difficulty achieving or maintaining an erection

CAUSES OF PELVIC FLOOR DYSFUNCTION

A range of factors can impact on pelvic floor dysfunction in men including:

- Obesity or being overweight
- Long standing constipation
- Bladder or spinal surgery
- Chronic cough
- Heavy lifting
- Increasing age
- Surgery for prostate cancer

HOW TO DO PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

In men pelvic floor exercises feel like a definite lift and squeeze in around the urethra and the back passage. Pelvic floor exercises should not involve utilizing the muscles in the buttocks, upper abdominal muscles or the thighs, these must remain relaxed throughout.



HOW DO I FIND MY PELVIC FLOOR?

The following is a guide to enable you to locate your pelvic floor and know what it feels like to engage these muscles, prior to commencing the pelvic floor exercise program.

NB: *These are not the exercises and should only be used to locate the pelvic floor.*

- When emptying your bladder try to stop or slow the flow of urine once you have started.
- Try to lift and squeeze the ring of muscle around the anus as if you are trying to avoid passing wind.
- Use a mirror so that you can see your lower abdomen – upper thigh. When you engage the pelvic floor muscles you should see a visible lift of your scrotum and a drawing inwards of your penis.
- When you have finished voiding a contraction of the pelvic floor muscles can cause a squeezing effect on the urethra resulting in the passage of any remaining urine. (This can be useful not only to find pelvic floor but to also overcome post void dribble).

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISE TRAINING

When commencing this training program start out with the number of exercises you can comfortably manage using the correct technique and build up slowly till you are able to complete the full program. These exercises should be commenced one to two days after having the catheter removed and continue until you have full control over your bladder.

- Once you have successfully located your pelvic floor muscles you can begin the exercise program by lifting and squeezing without holding your breath - for a count of eight and then relax for a count of eight.
- Repeat this exercise ten times.
- Next squeeze and lift the pelvic floor without holding (squeeze, relax, squeeze, relax no breaks) – repeat this exercise eight to ten times and then relax.
- This is one set of exercises. You should repeat this three times a day.

Doing these exercises more often will not help you any further and may lead to fatigue of the muscles and increased leakage. The pelvic floor exercise program should be performed in a variety of different positions i.e. sitting, standing, lying as this will aid in your ability to exercise the muscles fully.
