Kegel Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises

For Men before and after robotic prostatectomy

The basic information presented here was developed by clinicians. It may differ to some extent from your particular situation. This information is intended to be used only in conjunction with professional guidance from healthcare providers.

Pelvic floor muscle exercises (often called "Kegel Exercises") will help strengthen the muscles that support the bladder and urethra in men, and the bladder, urethra, uterus and vagina in women. Strengthening these muscles may help to decrease urinary urgency and incontinence. These exercises may be suggested by your doctor before or after certain types of surgery, such as prostatectomy and urinary diversions, and for women who suffer from stress incontinence after having given birth.

These muscle exercises should be performed prior to robotic prostatectomy. Some patients have excellent urinary control after surgery without the benefit of these exercises, but I feel that these exercises will help the majority of the people regain control sooner. It is more difficult to learn these exercises after surgery, when incontinence is a bigger problem, so starting before is recommended.

How to do the Exercises

First, it is important to find the right muscles. The muscle group that we reinforce with these muscles go to the urinary and rectal muscles. These muscles are called the pelvic floor muscles.

Use these methods to locate them. Make a mental note their location and how a proper squeeze of these muscles feel.
1. Try to stop the flow of urine while sitting on the toilet. If you can do this, then you are using the right muscles.
2. Imagine that you are trying to stop passing gas. If you feel a "pulling" sensation in your buttocks and rectum, then you are using the right muscles.
3. Do not use other muscles (thighs, buttocks, and abdominals) while doing the exercises. These muscles should remain relaxed. Do not hold your breath or tighten your chest during these exercises. Once you identify the right muscles, you can do these exercises at anytime, even if you are not urinating. You may do these exercises while lying, sitting, standing or walking.

The Exercise Program

Begin by emptying your bladder.
Contract your pelvic floor muscles (for example, stop the flow of urine) for 3-5 seconds.
Then relax your muscles completely for 10 seconds.
Perform 10 repetitions one to three times a day.
At first, you may be able to hold the contractions for only a few seconds. As the exercises become easier, you can slowly increase the length of the contractions.
For best results, do your exercises every day. Don't overdo it. Over-exercising may instead cause muscle fatigue and increase the leakage of urine. You should see some results in four to six weeks.

It may be helpful to establish an exercise routine. Some examples of routines include:
During every TV commercial break.
At every stop sign and stop light while driving.
While standing in line at the store or grocery.
While standing in the elevator.

Helpful Hints

If you have stress incontinence and to protect your pelvic muscles from damage, think ahead.
Begin to tighten your pelvic muscles:
When you feel a cough or sneeze coming on.
Before you stand up.
Before lifting objects or exerting yourself.
When you are laughing.
For minor leakage, use an absorbent pad (such as Poise, or Depend Guards for Men)