



# Pelvic Floor Exercises

## A Guide for Women

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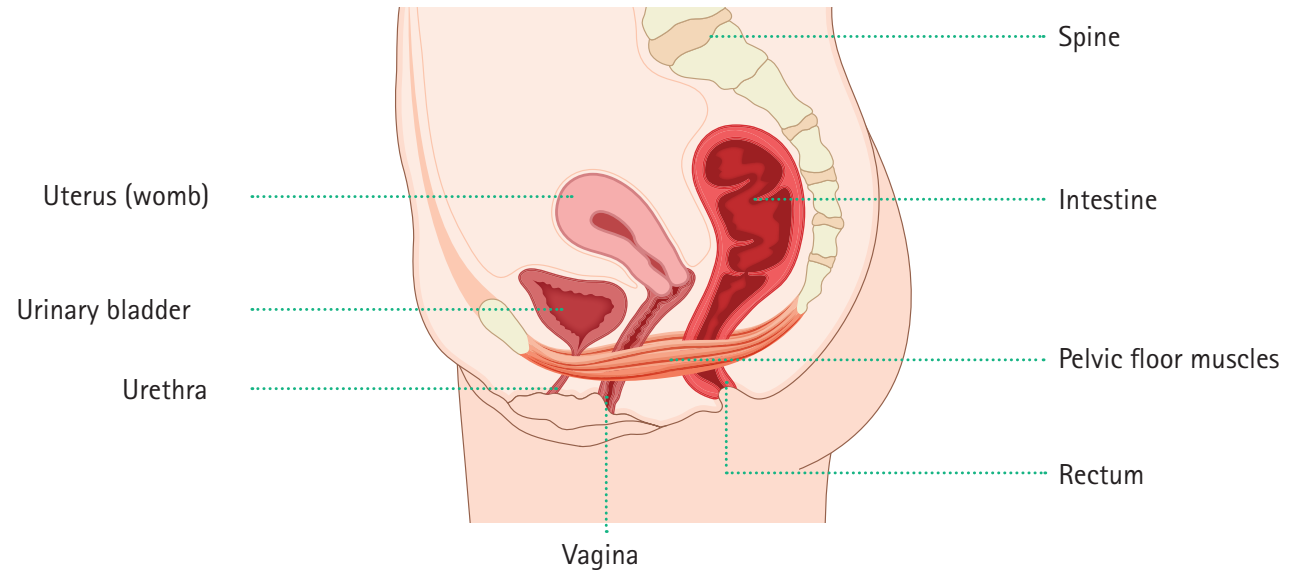
## A Guide For Women

Pelvic floor exercises (or Kegel exercises) are very important, and help prevent or control urinary incontinence and other pelvic floor problems. Women of all ages can benefit from these exercises, and it is never too late to start.

Pelvic muscles work like a hammock to support the pelvic organs, including the bladder, bowel and uterus. When they contract, the openings to the vagina, rectum and urethra tighten, ensuring continence is maintained. Pelvic floor muscles also play an important role in pregnancy and sexual function.

During pregnancy, pelvic floor muscles support the baby and assist in the birthing process, but the act of childbirth and carrying the baby weakens these important muscles. Healthy, strong muscles before the baby is born will mend more easily after the birth and help to reduce or avoid stress incontinence in later months/years.

Other factors that cause a weakening of the pelvic floor include: age, surgery, obesity, the menopause, excessive straining from constipation, heavy lifting and chronic coughing. Strengthening your pelvic floor can help to reduce the risk of developing stress and urge incontinence, as well as helping to reduce pelvic pain and increasing pleasurable sensations during sex. If you are already suffering from incontinence relating to a weak pelvic floor, you can still restore strength to these muscles to improve your symptoms by performing your pelvic floor exercises (Kegel exercises).



### Pelvic floor exercises may be beneficial if you:



Leak urine while sneezing, laughing or coughing



Leak urine while exercising (running, training, exercise classes)



Have a strong, sudden urge to urinate or you are losing a large amount of urine



Are pregnant or after childbirth, to help prevent stress incontinence



Have recently had gynaecological surgery, to help your body to strengthen and recover



Leak stool, and experience uncontrollable loss of wind

# How to do Pelvic Floor Exercises

## Go ahead and perform the exercises in any position

Some people find it easier to do them lying down at first, but they can also be done standing up or sitting down.

## Identify the right muscles

To understand how it feels to engage your pelvic floor muscles, imagine you are trying to stop yourself from passing wind and urine at the same time. Draw your muscles upwards and forwards from the back passage towards the vagina.

## Improve your technique

Imagine you are sitting on a marble. Engage your pelvic muscles so it feels like you could lift up this marble. Hold the position for three seconds, relax for three and repeat.

## Focus for best results

Focus on isolating and tightening your pelvic floor muscles only. Be careful not to squeeze the muscles in your abdomen, thighs or buttocks. Always breathe freely throughout the exercise and refrain from holding your breath.

## Do your exercises each day

Perform 10 x short squeezes and 10 x long squeezes per day. Repeat 3 times per day.

## BEGINNERS PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

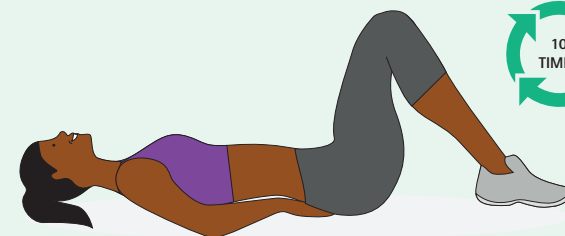
### Short Squeezes

1. Lie, stand or sit, with your knees slightly apart
2. Quickly squeeze the pelvic muscles around your rectum and vagina
3. Hold for 2 seconds, and release



### LONG SQUEEZES

1. Lie, stand or sit with your knees slightly apart
2. Slowly tighten the pelvic muscles around your rectum and vagina
3. Squeeze both areas as hard as you can
4. Hold for 10 seconds and relax



## ADVANCED PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

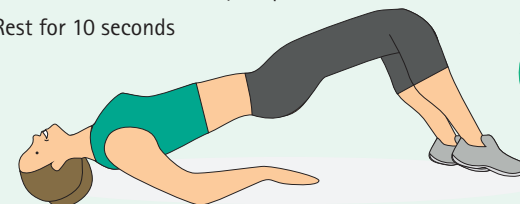
### Wall Squat

1. Stand with your back against the wall, with feet hip-width apart
2. Take a deep breath, squeeze and lift your pelvic muscles and lower into a squat
3. Hold for 10 seconds. Keep breathing
4. Return to standing and release your pelvic floor
5. Rest for 10 seconds



### Bridge Position

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on floor, hip-width apart
2. Take a deep breath in, squeeze and lift your pelvic muscles. Keep breathing
3. Lift your hips. Hold the position for 10 seconds
4. Lower down and release your pelvic floor
5. Rest for 10 seconds



For best results, remove your Diven before practicing your pelvic floor exercises.

# Help and Advice

## When to do your pelvic floor training

Make these exercises part of your daily routine. You can do pelvic floor strengthening exercises discreetly at any time and they do not take long to do. You can perform them sitting down, standing up, lying down, relaxing on the sofa; whatever is best for you.

## Having trouble with your exercises?

If your symptoms are bothersome and you are struggling with your exercises, do not feel embarrassed to ask for help. You can make an appointment with your GP and ask them to refer you to a Continence Physiotherapist who is an expert in this field. If you are still under maternity care, you can speak to your midwife or health visitor for helpful advice so that you can learn how to isolate and exercise the correct muscles.

## When to expect results

If you do pelvic floor exercises regularly, you can expect results, such as less frequent urine leakage, within about 4-6 weeks, but it may take up to 3 months to see a major change. For continued benefits, make pelvic floor exercises a permanent part of your daily routine.

## Overactive pelvic floor muscle

Sometimes the pelvic floor muscles can be overactive or tense, instead of weak, and present the same symptoms either way. You may not know that is the case so if you are starting pelvic floor muscle exercises and find that you cannot activate a contraction AND relaxation, then we would recommend you stop and seek advice from a Specialist/Experienced Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist.

# Diveen® - Back to Being Me

## A Simple Device to Help Prevent Urine Leaks



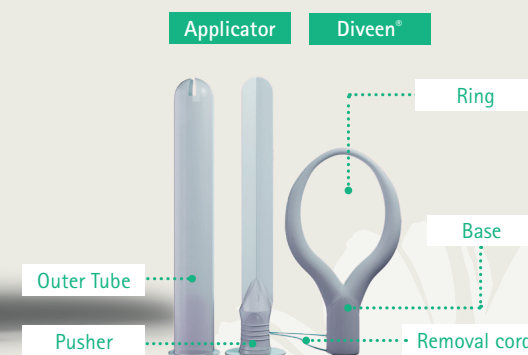
Some women who finish a 12 week nurse/physiotherapist led programme of Pelvic Floor Exercises may still experience troublesome urine leakage episodes. As an alternative to surgery, Diveen® is a stress incontinence device, worn in the vagina, that supports the pelvic floor and helps reduce urine leaks.

Diveen® is an intravaginal device that is worn in the same place as a tampon, and can help with your symptoms. Available on prescription and to purchase direct from B. Braun.

For more information on Diveen®:

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✉️ [diveen.bbmuk@bbraun.com](mailto:diveen.bbmuk@bbraun.com)



For videos and more information, please scan the QR code:



Diveen® Order Information	Size	Order Code
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