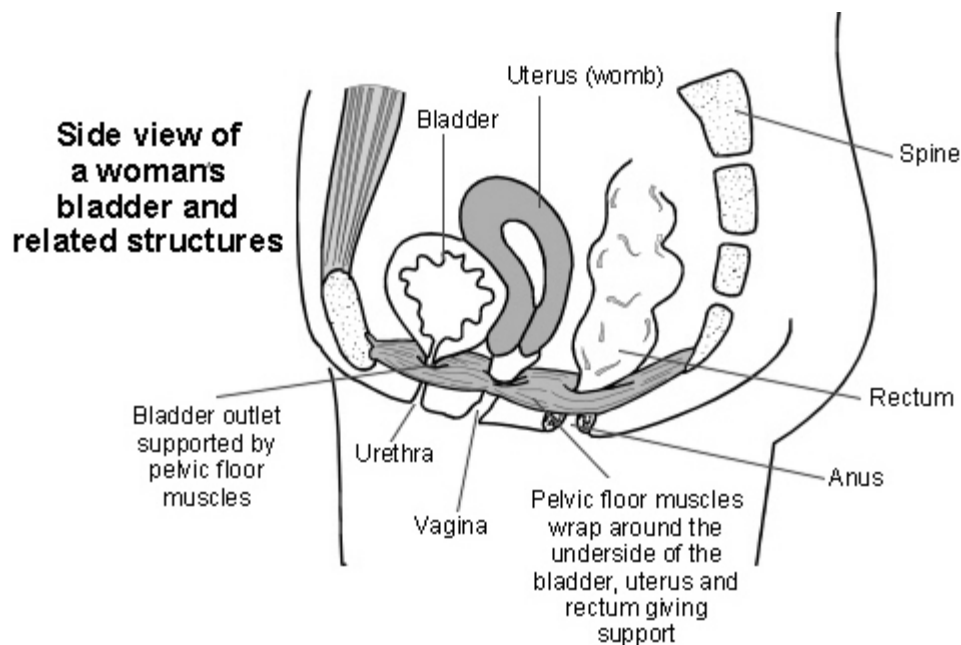


Pelvic floor exercises

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What are the pelvic floor muscles?

The pelvic floor muscles are a group of muscles that wrap around the underside of the bladder and rectum. They help to hold your bladder, uterus (womb), and bowel in place.



Pelvic floor exercises are specially recommended

- If you have urinary incontinence (leakage of urine)
- After childbirth : Pelvic floor muscles are weakened by childbirth. If you do pelvic floor muscle exercises after childbirth, it may prevent stress incontinence developing later in life.

You can do these exercises anywhere, so try to build them into your daily routine:

It is not always easy to find your pelvic floor muscles. Exercising them should not show at all 'on the outside'. You should not pull in your tummy excessively, squeeze your legs together, tighten your buttocks or hold your breath! Here is what to do:

1. Sit comfortably with your knees slightly apart. Now imagine that you are trying to stop yourself passing wind from the bowel. To do this you must squeeze the muscles around the back passage. Try squeezing and lifting that muscle as if you really do have wind. You should be able to feel the muscle move. Your buttocks and legs should not move at all

2. Now imagine you are sitting on the toilet passing urine. Picture yourself trying to stop the stream of urine. You should be using the same group of muscles that you used before, but don't be surprised if you find this harder. (Do not try to stop the stream when you are actually passing water as this may - if repeated - cause problems with correct emptying).

3. Now try to tighten the muscles around your back passage, vagina and front passage and lift up inside as if trying to stop passing wind and urine at the same time

Try lifting and squeezing them as long as you can. Rest for 4 seconds and then repeat the contraction. Build up your strength until you can do 10 slow contractions at a time, holding them for 10 seconds each with rests of 4 seconds in between.

This pamphlet is intended to provide you with general information. It does not substitute for doctor's advice and does not contain all known facts about pelvic floor exercises