

Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises tone and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles that surround the openings of the urethra, vagina and rectum. They are one of the noninvasive treatment options for stress urinary incontinence. Like all other exercises, Kegel's work only if the right muscles are used, the "squeeze" is held long enough, and enough repetitions are done.

To do Kegel exercises:

Squeeze the muscles that are used to stop the flow of urine. This movement pulls the vagina and the rectum up and back.

Hold the squeeze for 10 seconds, then release.

Do this 10-20 times in a row, at least 3 times a day, for at least 12 weeks.

Make sure you are not tightening your stomach, thigh or buttock muscles. Try to avoid holding your breath as you do them.

To determine whether or not you are tightening the correct muscles, try once or twice to stop the flow of urine when you are emptying your bladder. Or, insert a finger into your vagina while you are doing a Kegel squeeze. You should be able to feel the muscles work as they tighten around your finger. Your physician can also check during your pelvic examination to make sure you are doing the exercises correctly.