

## YOUR HOME PROGRAM

### PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISE GUIDELINES

- Challenge your muscles to do more than they are used to doing. The quality of the exercise is more important than the number you perform.
- Avoid straining, holding your breath or using buttock or leg muscles while you exercise the pelvic floor muscles. Count out loud to avoid straining.
- Relax your body and breathe during your exercises. Coordinate your breathing with your pelvic floor contraction by blowing out or exhaling while you contract your pelvic floor muscles.
- Concentrate on activating both the surface and deep layers of the pelvic floor muscles with each exercise.

### POSITION FOR THE EXERCISES

- Start lying down with your knees bent and supported with pillows.
- Once you've gained awareness and can feel the contractions you may perform the exercises either sitting or standing.

### QUICK CONTRACTIONS

- Repeat this exercise 25 times. Do the exercise 1 times per day.
- Rapidly contract your pelvic floor muscles and hold for 2 seconds relax for 2 seconds.
- Try to do the contraction on breathing exhalation.

### ENDURANCE CONTRACTIONS

- Repeat this 20 times. Do the exercise 1 times per day.
- Pull your pelvic floor muscles up and in and hold for 10 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- Count out loud while you are holding the contraction to make sure that you are breathing throughout the exercise and not straining.

### OTHER EXERCISES/INSTRUCTIONS

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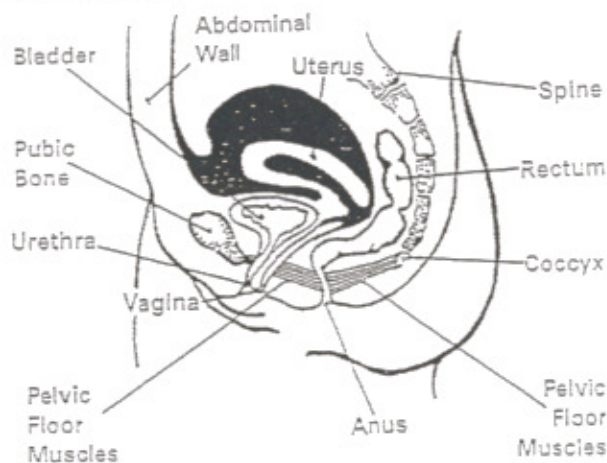
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## THE FEMALE PELVIC FLOOR

The pelvic floor consists of several layers of muscles that cover the bottom of the pelvic cavity. These muscles have several distinct roles:

1. To support the pelvic organs, the bladder, uterus and colon within the pelvis.
2. To assist in stopping and starting the flow of urine or the passage of gas or stool.
3. To aid in sexual appreciation.



### HOW TO LOCATE THE PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

#### The Urine Stop Test

- At the midstream of your urine flow, squeeze the pelvic floor muscles. You should feel the sensation of the openings close and the muscles pulling up and into the pelvic cavity. If you have strong muscles you will slow or stop the stream of urine.
- Try to stop or slow the flow of urine without tensing the muscles of your legs or buttocks.
- Do this only to locate the muscles, not as a daily exercise.

#### Feeling the Muscle

- You can insert 1 or 2 fingers into the vagina to feel the contraction and lifting of the muscles. You should feel the opening of the vagina tighten around your finger.
- Place a fingertip on the anal opening. Contract and lift the muscles as though you were holding back gas or a bowel movement. You will feel your anal opening tighten.

#### Watching the Muscle Contract

- Begin by lying on a flat surface. Position yourself with your knees apart and bent with your head elevated and supported on several pillows. Use a mirror to look at the anal and vaginal openings and the perineal body (the area between the two openings).
- Contract or tighten the muscles around the openings and watch for a lifting of the perineal body and closure of the openings.
- If you see a bulge or feel tissues coming out of your openings, this is an incorrect contraction and you should notify your health care provider for more instructions.