

Pelvic Floor Therapy

D R . K A T H Y S A N T O R I E L L O

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- No one should live with leaking!
- Pelvic Floor Muscles can be trained and strengthened like any other muscle.
- Like any other training program, your commitment to practice the exercises will have a significant impact on the results.

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LEAKING? WE HAVE THE ANSWER!

The muscles of the pelvic floor are like a hammock, acting to support the organs of the abdomen and pelvis (including the bladder.) They stretch from the front of the pubic bone, to the back of the sacrum. Pelvic floor muscles become weakened or damaged with pregnancy, during childbirth, surgery, excess straining, obesity, or simply due to genetic inheritance or even aging. The result can be pelvic pain, bulging, back pain, incomplete emptying, posturing, or even incontinence.

To combat such issues, we teach Kegel exercises. Unfortunately for some, practicing Kegels at home has just not achieved adequate results. Adding a Biofeedback Program or Pelvic Floor Therapy makes use of an internal sensor (placed in the vagina) to assess and strengthen the pelvic floor. Contracting your muscles to squeeze around the vaginal sensor, utilizes the same muscles when one

wishes to delay urination or prevent passage of gas. Concentrating on pulling the sensor upward into the



It comes at the worst times!

body, is often confused with improper squeezing of the abdominal muscles, the buttocks, even the thighs. Improper or downward forces can worsen incontinence. Electronic skin sensors and computer feedback help identify true pelvic floor muscles activity.

The second part of the Pelvic Floor Therapy Program includes the use of impulses emitted through the sensor, creating pelvic floor muscle contractions without voluntary assistance. By relaxing, one

will feel a pulling or contacting sensation of the muscles. Learning to squeeze along with the controlled impulses increases your awareness of the correct muscles to use when doing exercises alone. This part of the therapy gives the pelvic floor a good workout. Most importantly, contraction of the pelvic floor WILL reduce urgency symptoms (feeling the need to urinate, without the time to make it to the toilet). The bladder muscles must relax when the pelvic floor muscles contract. They work opposite, or in tandem, similar to your biceps and triceps.

By entering this program once a week, you work with your clinician and a sophisticated computer program to improve the tone of the pelvic floor. Adding to the office treatments, we utilize practice at home. The commitment to rehabilitating these muscles will pay off.

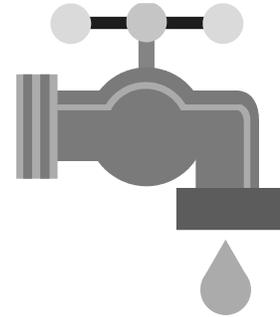
WHAT ARE KEGEL EXERCISES?

Exercises designed to help enhance and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles are referred to as Kegels. Developed in the 1940's, and named after gynecologist, Arnold Kegel, these exercises were once only a part of medical vocabulary. Recognizing their usefulness in pregnancy, with expectations of childbirth, they were designed to assist in

push power, to prevent laxity, and to decrease the risk of related pro-lapsed problems such as stress urinary incontinence.

Nowadays, Yoga, Pilates and other physical fitness programs are increasingly adding pelvic floor toning awareness to our lives. Proper pelvic tone can address issues of stress incontinence

(involuntary leakage of urine when abdominal pressure increases with coughing, laughing, sneezing, jumping or even walking. Amazingly, pelvic toning can also decrease chronic back ache, urinary urgency (referred to as over-active bladder) and even rectal, flatulence soiling or constipation issues.



All exercise requires a
COMMITMENT!

HOW TO DO KEGELS CORRECTLY

*“Stopping a
midstream flow of
urine is not
kegeling and is
not encouraged!”*

Attempting to find the right muscles used during Kegeling is much like trying to hold back gas or avoiding an involuntary flow of urine. This can be assisted by placing a finger in the vagina and feeling a squeeze or contraction around the finger. However, actually stopping a midstream of urine is not Kegeling, and is not encouraged!

Once a bladder is in the process of contracting (i.e. emptying or voiding) then it should be encouraged to empty completely. During this process the bladder or detrusor muscle must squeeze and the pelvic floor muscles must relax. Learning to relax the pelvic floor is as important as contracting it.

When using muscles incorrectly you will feel abdominal contractions, buttock or inner thigh contracting or squeezes. Placing a hand on the lower abdomen and inner thighs can help identify wrong activity areas. At first, minimal to no pelvic floor squeezing may be felt. This is okay! Use the finger in the vagina again. A very subtle flick is the correct muscle power. Try quick flicks to a count of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, rest for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Work up to a count of 10 quick flicks, with 10 count rest. Repeat 10 times. Next try to achieve a long, sustained squeeze to a count of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, rest for 10. Repeat 10 times. Work up to a sustained squeeze for the count of 10! Rest for 10. Repeat 10 times.

Practice alternating a series of quickies then sustained activities. Both are important.

Remember, it is the repetitive process that will bring results. Start in the privacy of your bathroom. Then, surprisingly you can perform Kegels anywhere, without anyone even knowing. Waiting at a stop light, or in line at a store, are perfect opportunities to sneak in a few squeezes. It only takes a few minutes, a couple of times a day. As the muscles grow stronger, they will hold before sneezing, coughing, or lifting. Connect a daily activity with remembering to squeeze - perhaps tooth brushing, dish washing etc. or set a timer/reminder.

URGE CONTROL TECHNIQUES



Don't spend all your time here— We can help!

1. Stop what you are doing and stay quiet. Sit down when possible or stand quietly. Remain very still. When you are still, it is easier to control your urge.
2. Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles quickly several times. Do not relax fully in between.
3. Relax the rest of your body. Take a few deep breaths to help your relax and let go of your tension.
4. Concentrate on suppressing the urge feeling.
5. Wait until the urge subsides.
6. Walk to the bathroom at a normal pace. Do not rush. Continue squeezing you pelvic floor muscles quickly while you walk.
7. Controlling the urge to urinate is not a difficult or impossible task. This technique may not work right away. Be patient and do not get discouraged. With practice, you will learn to control urge incontinence.

DIETARY IRRITANTS TO AVOID

If bladder symptoms are related to dietary factors, strict adherence to a diet which eliminates the food products below should bring significant relief in about 10 days. After 10

days you may begin to add the foods back into your diet one by one. This way, if something does cause you symptoms, you will be able to identify what it is. When you

begin to add foods back into your diet, it is crucial that you maintain a significant water intake. You should drink at least 1-2 quarts of water daily.

“Bladder symptoms are related to dietary factors.”

- All alcoholic beverages
- Apples
- Apple Juice
- Cantaloupe
- Carbonated drinks
- Chillies/Spicy foods
- Chocolate
- Citrus fruit juice
- Coffee
- Cranberries
- Grapes
- Guava
- Honey
- Lemon Juice
- Nutra-Sweet
- Onions
- Peaches
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Strawberries
- Tea
- Tomatoes
- Vinegar
- Vitamin B Complex

OTHER CHANGES TO MAKE

Eat a high fiber diet

Fiber in the diet helps prevent constipation and straining during a bowel movement. Straining causes downward pressure through the pelvic floor muscles, causing over stretching of the muscles. Include whole grain cereals, breads and other grain products, as well as vegetables and fruits.

Stop Smoking

A chronic smoker's cough puts pressure on the pelvic floor muscles. Cigarette smoking is also irritating to the lining of the bladder.

Avoid alcohol intake

Alcohol is a diuretic which will cause you to urinate more often. Alcohol also decreases your ability to use your pelvic floor muscles.

Drink Water

Try to drink 8-10 cups of fluid each day to prevent your urine from becoming concentrated. Fluid includes water, juice, milk, and soups. Avoid caffeinated and alcoholic beverages as these are diuretics. Your urine should be light yellow to clear in color. Dark yellow or orange urine could mean that you

need to drink more. Concentrated or 'strong' urine may irritate the bladder.

Changes in Diet

Some foods may make a difference in urine leakage. Check your daily food and liquid intake for common bladder irritants. Avoid any of these that irritate your bladder. More common bladder irritants are:

- Very Acidity Fruits/ Juices
- Tomatoes and Tomato based products
- Spicy Foods: Mexican, This, Indian, Cajun
- Caffeine

OTHER OPTIONS



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Local use of estrogen cream can make a tremendous impact on tissue or skin integrity. Ask Dr. Santoriello if you qualify for such use. The cream is absorbed through the vagina, nourishing or rejuvenating the tissues lining the urethra and bladder.

Results should be noticeable in 3-4 weeks. After weeks, one might have gained enough toning to be satisfied with continued home Kegel activity. However, some pelvic floor trauma or laxity is still too great for exercise alone to fix. Inserting of a plastic support device (a pessary) can alleviate symptoms, or one might choose an outpatient surgical pelvic lift (similar to a face lift). Quite often a sling, placed under the bladder neck (referred to as a tension free tape) can get amazing results. Involuntary loss, causing dampness, from dribbling to complete wetness, does not have to be a continued way of life. Feelings of embarrassment, and changes in one's social and recreational activities can be diminished. Pelvic Floor Therapy is a simple natural first step to reclaiming a good life.

Caffeine is a stimulant and a diuretic. Caffeine can be found in:

- Coffee
- Tea
- Chocolate
- Dark Cola
- Mountain Dew
- Mellow Yellow

Please note that many cough medicines and other over-the-counter medications contain caffeine. Read the labels and check with your pharmacist for substitutes.

- You may drink herbal teas provided they don't contain large amounts of citrus.
- Fruit juices; apricots, pear and papaya.
- Late harvest dessert wines.
- Ovaltine or carob drinks instead of chocolate.

A V O I D C A F F E I N E !

Try removing these bladder irritants from your diet for a few weeks and see if you improve. Remove one irritant at a time and if you find that it does not make a difference, put it back into your diet. Remove caffeine slowly from your diet, some people have been known to develop headaches from cutting back too quickly.

Caffeine
Content mg

Soft Drinks – 12 oz

Mountain Dew	52
Tab	44
Sunkist	42
Dr. Pepper	38
Diet Dr. Pepper	37
Pepsi Cola	37
Coca Cola	34

Coffee (5 oz)

Decaffeinated	2
Instant, Regular	66
Freeze Dried	66
Percolated	110
Drip	146

Bagged Tea

Black	21-50
Green	9-36
Oolong	13-40

Leaf Tea

Black	31-40
Darjeeling	19-28
Oolong	17-24
Green	28-35
Iced Tea (12 oz)	22-36

Cocoa & Chocolate

Cocoa Drink (6oz)	10
Milk Chocolate	6
Sweet or Dark Chocolate (1 oz)	20
Baking Choc. (1oz)	35
Chocolate Syrup	13

Stimulants (Std dose)

NoDoz Tablets	100
Vivarin Tablets	200

Pain Relievers (Std Dose)

Anacin	32
Excedrin	65
Midol	32

Diuretics (Std Dose)

	100-200
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Cold Medicines (Std. Dose)

	30
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Weight Control Aids (Daily dose)

Dexatrim, Extra Strength	200
Dietac	200
Appedrine	
Max strength	100