

Kegel Exercises: Benefits and How to Do Them

Kegel exercises, also called pelvic floor exercises, help strengthen the muscles, tissues and ligaments stretching from the pubic bone in front to the read end of the spine in back. It functions like a hammock to support the uterus, bladder, intestines and bowels. Kegel exercises also help strengthen vaginal muscles.

What are the benefits of pelvic floor exercises?

Pregnant women who perform Kegel exercises often find they have an easier birth. Strengthening the pelvic floor muscles during pregnancy can help you develop the ability to control your muscles during labor and delivery. Toning these muscles will also minimize two common problems during pregnancy: decreased bladder control and hemorrhoids. Other benefits include:

Toned and strengthened pelvic floor muscles help reduce the risk of a prolapse

Proper bladder and bowel movements, relief from constipation and minimal possibilities of hemorrhoids

Lessens instances of urinary incontinence or leakage (common during all trimesters of pregnancy) when laughing, sneezing, coughing or carrying something heavy

Helps support the increasing weight of the growing baby

Proves beneficial in the ninth month as it relaxes the pelvic floor, shortening the second phase of labor as you are attempting to push the baby out, also minimizing the chances of requiring an episiotomy

Kegel exercises are also recommended after pregnancy to promote perineal healing, regain bladder control, and strengthen pelvic floor muscles. The best thing about Kegel exercises is that they can be done anywhere, and no one knows you're doing them.

How to do Kegel Exercises

There a few ways to locate your Kegel muscles. You can insert a finger into the vagina, and try to squeeze the muscles surrounding it. Or you can practice stopping the flow of urine when urinating. (However, you don't want to do this too often during urination because it can actually weaken the muscles over time and/or increase your chance of a urinary infection.) Once you have located your pelvic floor muscles, contract these muscles for 5-10 seconds, then relax, repeating 10-20 times. (Make sure to empty your bladder before doing your Kegels!) While exercising your pelvic floor, avoid pulling your stomach in, pausing your breath, moving your legs, or squeezing your buttock and abdominal muscles . The only area you should be working is the pelvic muscle. Do not attempt it while urinating as it might make the muscles weak putting you at the

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risk of urinary infection. If you already have urinary incontinence, attempt to squeeze your pelvic floor muscles the moment you cough or sneeze as this might help in preventing a urine leakage. Refrain from overdoing it as then you may have to strain while urinating or during bowel movements.

When to do Kegels?

You can do pelvic floor exercises discreetly just about anytime.

When youâ€™re stopped at a red light

In the waiting room at the midwife or doctorâ€™s office

Drive-throughâ€™s such as the bank, dry cleaners, and pharmacy

When to expect results

If you do Kegel exercises regularly, you can expect results â€” such as less frequent urine leakage â€” within about a few weeks to a few months. For continued benefits, make pelvic floor exercises a permanent part of your daily routine.

When youâ€™re having trouble

If youâ€™re having trouble doing Kegel exercises, donâ€™t be embarrassed to ask for help. Your doctor or other health care provider can give you important feedback so that you learn to isolate and exercise the correct muscles.

Are Kegel weights and balls safe while pregnant?

Kegel weights or balls, also known as pleasure balls, do the work of Kegel exercise as they are said to strengthen the vaginal muscles, improve bladder control as well as increase sex drive. However, attempting to insert it into your vagina may not be a proper thing to do when pregnant or during nursing as there are risks of bacterial infections. Hence, a doctorâ€™s advice is always needed if you intend to use Kegel balls when pregnant.

Want to Know More?

Compiled using information from the following sources:

Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.com>

Cleveland Clinic Health System, <https://www.cchs.net/>

Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn: The Complete Guide. Simkin, Penny P.T., et al, CH. 6.

Reference

[CHILDREN'S SHORT STORIES for Action Medical Research](#)

[Presidential Takedown: How Anthony Fauci, the CDC, NIH, and the WHO Conspired to Overthrow President Trump](#)