

RUBI KHILNANI, M.D. FACOG

Obstetrics, Gynecology and Infertility

1 Baywood Ave., Suite # 9, San Mateo, CA 94402

Tel: (650) 477-8112 Fax: (650) 401-8200

PELVIC FLOOR (KEGEL) EXERCISES

1. The Kegel (pronounced Kay-gill) was originally developed by Arnold Kegel, M.D., to deal with the problem of stress urinary incontinence. You might have been instructed by your physician in the office how to contract these muscles. At home, you can insert two fingers into the vagina and feel the contraction of these muscles. We call these muscles the "Pelvic Floor" because they help support the pelvic organs, especially during coughing and sneezing. Squeezing the pelvic floor while standing feels like you are "lifting" the area around the vagina and will interrupt the stream of urine while voiding. Once you are certain which muscles to use, you can exercise the pelvic floor without interrupting the urine stream or having to insert two fingers into the vagina. Make sure you are not bearing down, squeezing your buttocks, or straining abdominally – these are not the muscles to be exercised. You may wish to place your hand on your buttock muscle to keep these muscles relaxed while performing the exercises.
2. Squeeze these muscles as hard as you can for a slow count five, eventually working up to a slow count of ten. Rest for 15 seconds, and then start another contraction.
3. You should perform 50 squeezes every day. Many women try to do these exercises in sets of five or ten time. You might remind yourself to do these exercises in sets of five or ten at a time. You might remind yourself to do these exercises by starting them every time you are waiting at a red light, doing dishes, lying in bed, watching a television commercial, "on hold" on the telephone, etc. If you are having trouble concentrating, you may want to set aside a special time to perform sets kegel exercises. In addition to the long, hard contractions you are doing, try doing some quick flicks of these muscles throughout the day. Because the "Pelvic floor" muscle is a muscle like any other, when over exercised, it can become sore. If this happens, either stop doing Kegels for one to two days temporarily until soreness disappears, or reduce substantially the number doe per day and gradually increase to recommended number.
4. Check your progress periodically. As the "Pelvic floor" muscles strengthen, you will feel stronger tightening against the fingers. The progress is slow however, so don't expect quick changes.
5. Work hard! As with any exercise program, improvement often is related to how faithfully you adhere to your exercise program. Pelvic floor exercises do not have the side effects or the expense associated with other treatments for urinary incontinence. They have been shown to help even with severe stress incontinence. It may take several months to see full effect of your exercise program. If you are discouraged, see us at regular visits to assess your progress. Good Luck!