



A strong pelvic floor is essential to avoid urinary incontinence and other problems after childbirth. In addition, strong pelvic muscles will have positive influence on sexual satisfaction for both the man and the woman. These exercises involve isolating, contracting, holding and releasing the PC-muscle or *pubococcygeus muscle*.

Even though this program originally was made for women (1), even men may benefit from doing the exercises to gain control over their arousal level during intercourse and consequently delaying orgasm by contracting their PC-muscle.

1. Positioning

When first starting out, do your exercises while lying on your back with your knees bent, supported by pillows. It is important to take the time to develop a proper technique. Lying down will make your exercises easier because you do not need to work against the forces of gravity.

Once you are comfortable with your exercises in a lying position, you may increase the challenge by doing exercises in a sitting position. Some prefer sitting on a hard chair. Later you may do the exercises in a standing position and finally you may progress to do exercises while walking.

2. Isolating Your PC-muscle

To isolate your PC-muscle start by relaxing your stomach muscles

abdominals), bum cheeks (*gluteal muscles*) and legs (*hip adductors*) as much as possible. This relaxation is important to ensure that you are contracting only the pelvic floor muscles during exercise.

Pull your pelvic floor up and in. You may imagine that you are trying to stop the urine flow while urinating or holding in gas while standing in a crowded elevator.

At the toiled you may occasionally try to stop urinating to control that you are isolating the PC-muscle.

3. Contracting and Releasing

Contract your PC-muscle and hold for 5 seconds, then rest for 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times. Then contract the PC-muscle for 1 second and relax for 1 second. Repeat 5 times. Contracting for different lengths of time works the different muscle fibers in the PC-muscle.

This set of exercise takes approximately one minute to complete. Try to complete 10 sets daily.

Some Helpful Tips

Do not forget to breathe. Counting out loud may help. It is normal for your PC-muscle to fatigue quickly. That is why these exercises incorporate twice as much rest time for each contraction.

Spread your exercise sets throughout the day. Do not try to contract an exhausted muscle. You may do 3 sets in the morning, 4 during the afternoon and 3 in the evening. It is better to do fewer exercises properly than to do many improperly.

You may incorporate your PC-muscle exercises into regular daily activities. This makes it easier to get through with the exercises and gives you the possibility to do your exercises in many different positions.

If you are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant you should develop good habits for exercising your PC-muscle prior to delivery. This ensures that your pelvic floor muscles will be healthy and strong and will assist, rather than hinder, your delivery.

If you have good muscular control prior to delivery, it will be easier to do proper exercises later. These exercises are good for the blood flow

and may provide better healing of tissue damage related to delivery.

Reference

1. Berzuk, Kelli. A strong pelvic floor. Now nurses can spread the word. Nursing for Women's Health. February/March 2007.