



Looking after your pelvic floor



What is the pelvic floor?

An introduction to the male and female pelvic region

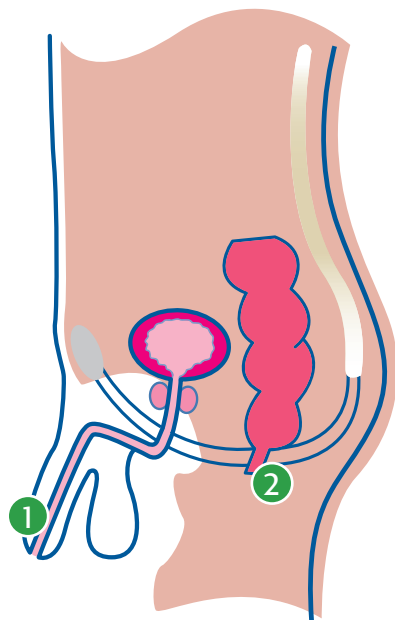
The pelvic floor is a strong 'sling' or 'hammock' of muscles that help to support the womb (in women), the bladder and the bowel. The muscles stretch across the inside of the pelvis and are attached to the pubic bone at the front and to the coccyx at the back.

In men it has two openings:

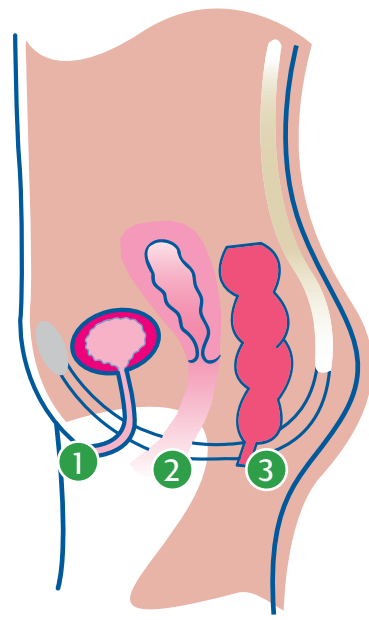
1. For the urethra, the small tube that carries urine from the bladder
2. For the bowel

In women it has three openings:

1. For the urethra, the small tube that carries urine from the bladder
2. For the vagina
3. For the bowel



Male pelvic floor



Female pelvic floor

Why is it important to keep it healthy by doing exercises?

Because the pelvic floor supports and keeps in place all the contents of your lower abdomen. This is especially important when undertaking any form of exercise, even walking.

A healthy pelvic floor will hold the bladder in place and the urethra tightly closed. When you need to go to the toilet the muscles relax and then tighten again. If the muscles become over stretched, you may suffer from leaking small amounts of urine when you cough or sneeze.

What might have happened to weaken your muscles?

Women:

- Giving birth, in particular the number of births and types of delivery
- If you are currently going through changes associated with the menopause

Men:

- Surgery for an enlarged prostate

Women and men:

- Being constipated and/or constantly straining to empty your bowels
- Doing a lot of heavy lifting
- Having a chronic cough
- Being overweight
- Being generally unfit



How to do the pelvic floor exercises

When you first start doing the exercises it is important that you find somewhere quiet and take time to concentrate so that you can locate the correct muscles. Read through the sequence carefully first so that you will know what to do.

Sit comfortably on a stool or a chair with your knees apart and feet flat on the floor. Lean forward and rest your forearms on your thighs.

Remember to:

- Keep breathing normally
- Do not push down when you are squeezing
- Try not to tighten your tummy, buttocks or thighs
- Do not pull your knees together

Eventually you will be able to do the exercises as part of your daily routine. It will help prompt your memory if you do them with particular jobs throughout the day.

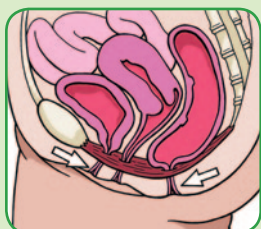
Aim at doing the exercises at least five times daily.

At the beginning take your time and be patient, it is the quality of the exercises that counts and it will take a while before you notice significant improvement.

How can you tell if the exercises are working?

- **For men**, if you are doing the exercises correctly you may feel the base of your penis move up slightly.
- **For women**, use the tip of your finger or a tampon in the vagina and squeeze tight. Can you feel something happening? You could also try squeezing during sexual intercourse and asking your partner if they can feel anything.
- If unsure, contact your local continence service.

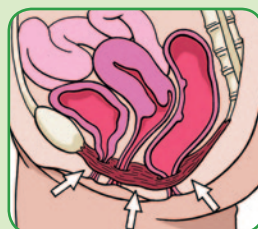
Exercise 1



Tighten the pelvic floor as long and as hard as you can as if you are trying to stop yourself passing wind.

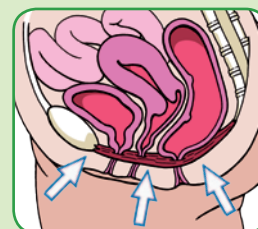


Try to build up to a maximum of 10 seconds.

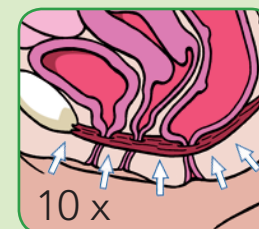


Rest for a couple of seconds and then repeat 10 times.

Exercise 2



Draw in the pelvic floor and hold for one second before relaxing.



Repeat in short succession up to 10 times.



Try to do these exercises 6 times a day for 12 weeks.



Promoting a healthy pelvic floor

- Do not 'put off' opening your bowels once you have had the urge to do so.
- Avoid constipation and straining when opening your bowels.
- Avoid bad habits such as going to the toilet 'just in case' as ultimately this will cause your bladder to reduce its capacity so you will need to go more often.
- Try to keep your weight within the right range for your height.
- Maintain a good fluid intake but avoid too many caffeine laden drinks which include tea, coffee and cola as these can irritate the bladder and will make holding on even more difficult.
- Seek medical advice for anything which may be contributing to the problem such as a chronic cough.

Remember, you are not alone

More than six million people in the UK have bladder problems of some kind.

Your GP, practice nurse, community nurse and health visitor are all used to helping people with this kind of problem. Also within your area, there will be a specialist nurse or continence advisor who will also be able to offer advice.

It must be noted that these exercises are most effective when a healthcare specialist with pelvic floor exercise knowledge, such as a physiotherapist or continence advisor teaches them.

Recognition

In 2010, SCA was ranked as one of the 100 world's most sustainable companies by Canadian Corporate Knights

SCA has been included in this global sustainability list since it was first presented in 2005

For the third consecutive year, SCA was named one of the world's most ethical companies in 2010 by the Ethisphere Institute, US.

In 2007, SCA was named the world's second greenest company by Eiris (Ethical Investments Research Services) and the British daily, the 'Independent'.

SCA has been listed on the FTSE4Good global sustainability index since 2001

We lifecycle!

Do you?



SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS UK LIMITED
Personal Care, Southfields Road,
Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 3EJ
www.TENA.co.uk

c/o Life Because our products make life easier for you and for millions of people around the world. Because our resources and the way we work are natural parts of the global lifecycle. And because we care.