Physical Therapy in Male Pelvic Floor Dysfunction

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The Male Pelvic Floor

Normal Situation

After Proctectomy

The most common complaints after radical prostatectomy are: incontinence, erectile dysfunction, but it’ll go away or at least improve over time. Conservative treatment can help.

What Are Kegel Exercises for Men?
The pelvic floor muscles stretches like a hammock from the coccyx at the back to the pubic bone in front. Kegels are exercises that help you to strengthen muscles that help bladder control and sexual dysfunction. Performing pelvic floor muscle exercises after prostate surgery is vital to your recovery. Doing these exercises after surgery (whilst a urinary catheter is in place) can irritate the bladder and cause discomfort. However, once the catheter is removed you may start the pelvic floor exercises straight away.

How Can Men Do Kegel Exercises?
Kegels are easy to do, once you know which muscles to target. The first step in performing pelvic floor muscle exercises is to identify the correct muscles. There are several ways to identify them. The first step is to locate your pelvic floor muscles by putting the middle finger on the perineum which is situated between the anus and the genitals.

How to do Kegels the Right Way
One of the easiest ways to locate your muscles is during urination. Here’s how:

- Halfway through urination, try to stop or slow down the flow of urine.
- Don’t make a habit of using Kegel exercises to start and stop your urine stream.
- Don’t tense the muscles in your legs, or abdomen, and don’t hold your breath.
- When you can slow or stop the flow of urine, you’ve successfully located these muscles.

Some men find these muscles by imagining that they are trying to stop the passage of gas. Squeezing these muscles gives a pulling sensation; these are the right muscles for pelvic exercises. It’s important not to contract other muscles.
To do Kegel exercises:
- Contract these muscles for a slow count of five seconds.
- Release the muscles to a slow count of ten seconds.
- Repeat 10 times.
- Do a set of 10 Kegels daily, three times a day.
- Remember not to tense your legs, your abdominal muscles while you’re doing Kegels.
- When you’re first starting, it may be easier to do Kegel exercises in the following positions: lying down with knees slightly apart; sitting cross-legged, bridge with hip rotations.

After a few weeks, increase the time until eventually you’re contracting the muscles for a slow five or 10 seconds, and do the exercises standing up. Fit in a set of Kegel exercises every time you do a routine task. Contract your pelvic floor muscles just before and during any activity that puts pressure on your abdomen: coughing, sneezing or heavy lifting.

When Will You See Results from Kegel Exercises?
If you do Kegels three times a day, you should see better bladder control in three to six weeks some men see it later after three months. If you don’t see any change after this period, your urethral sphincter is too weak to be enhanced by just Kegels. See your doctor. He can offer other therapeutic options. Many physical therapists use either biofeedback or e-stim as part of their protocol for treating pelvic floor dysfunction. Remember as it is long-term therapy, you may use home care devices, depending on the severity of your problem. Different devices are shown below: