

ALL ABOUT KEGEL'S EXERCISES

Kegel's exercises were originally developed by Dr. Arnold Kegel (Kay'-gill) to help women with problems controlling urination. They are designed to strengthen and give you voluntary control of a muscle called Pubococcygeus (pew-bo-kak-se-gee'-us), or P.C. for short. The P.C. muscle is part of the sling of muscle stretching from your pubic bone in front to your tailbone in back. Since the muscle encircles not only the urinary opening but also the outside of the vagina, some of Dr. Kegel's patients found that doing the exercises had a pleasant side effect – increased sexual awareness.

Why do Kegel's Exercises?

Kegel's exercises:

1. Can help you become more aware of feelings in your genital area
2. Can increase circulation in the genital area
3. May help increase sexual arousal started by other kinds of stimulation.
4. Can help restore muscle tone in the vagina after childbirth

Identifying the P.C. Muscle:

Sit on the toilet. Spread your legs apart. See if you can stop and start the flow of urine without moving your legs. That is your P.C. muscle, the one that turns the flow on and off. If you don't find it the first time, don't give up; try again the next time you have to urinate.

The Exercises:

Slow Kegel's:

Tighten the P.C. muscle as you did to stop the urine. Hold it for a slow count of three. Relax it.

Quick Kegel's:

Tighten and relax the P.C. muscle as rapidly as you can.

Pull in – Push out:

Pull up the entire pelvic floor as though trying to suck water into your vagina. Then push out or bear down as if trying to push the imaginary water out. (This exercise will use a number of "stomach" or "abdominal" muscles as well as the P.C. muscle.)

Start by doing ten of each of these exercises (one set) every day, and then increase to five sets throughout each day. As your strength increases, increase the number of times you do each exercise in each set by five (15, 20, 25, etc.).

You can do these exercises any time during daily activities which don't require a lot of moving around: driving your car, watching television, doing dishes, sitting in school, at your desk or lying in bed.

When you start you will probably notice that the muscle doesn't want to stay "contracted" during "slow Kegel's" and that you can't do "Quick Kegel's" very fast or evenly. Keep at it. In a week or two, you will probably notice that you can control it quite well.

Sometimes the muscle will start to feel a little tired. Not surprising. You probably haven't used it very much before. Take a few seconds, rest and start again.

A good way to check on how you are doing is to insert one or two lubricated fingers into your vagina to check the effects of the exercises.

Remember to keep breathing naturally and evenly while you are doing your Kegel's.

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