

The Male Pelvic Floor information for clients

What it is

The pelvic floor is a sling of muscles that run from the tail bone (coccyx) at the back of the pelvis to the pubic bone at the front. These muscles a) support the organs and b) prevent leaks and help with healthy bladder and bowel function.

Why it matters

It is not just women who have 'oops' moments, urinary incontinence (UI) is common in men, particularly as they get older, commonly due to a weak pelvic floor although there are other causes.

Types of incontinence

There are several types of incontinence, the most common of which are:

- **Urge incontinence:** the most common type where there is an urgent need to urinate and may be an involuntary leak
- **Stress incontinence:** leakage on sudden exertion such as coughing, laughing, heavy lifting or exercise
- **Mixed incontinence:** a combination of both stress and urge incontinence

Exercises

The key exercises for the pelvic floor involve contracting and lifting the muscles. To help you find your pelvic floor muscles, imagine you have a full bladder and are trying to hold in urine or are trying to hold in wind. The muscles you squeeze to do this are the pelvic floor muscles. Don't worry if you can't locate them or they seem weak at first – they will get stronger.

Sit comfortably with feet flat on floor, legs slightly apart and lean slightly forward.

To work the a) muscles tighten the muscles around the back passage as if trying to hold in wind (don't squeeze the buttocks though). Then tighten and lift the bladder as if trying to hold in urine. Keep breathing normally while holding up to a count of 10, then **slowly** relax the muscles back to normal.

To work the b) muscles draw the muscles up as before but faster, hold for up to 5 seconds then release slowly. Repeat these several times, building up to 10 or so of each type three times a day.

If done correctly they should feel a dip at the base of the scrotum.

Visualisations can help with these exercises:

- Imagine walking into a very cold sea, as the water get to groin level the scrotum lifts
- Imagine trying to 'shorten' the penis
- Imagine trying to stop wind escaping

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