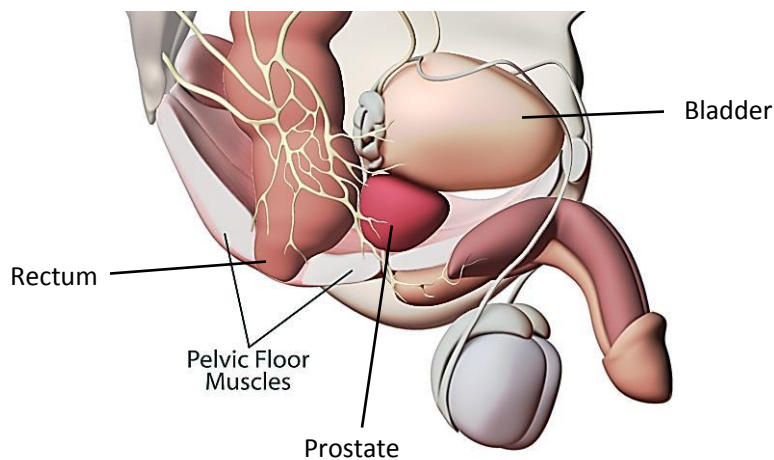


Pelvic Floor Muscle Training: Kegel Exercises

The pelvic floor muscles may be weakened after surgery for prostate cancer. Leakage is very common after surgery and the degree of incontinence varies from person to person. Pelvic floor muscle training, or “Kegels”, is an effective approach to improving urinary (and possibly sexual function as well). These exercises target the pelvic floor muscles, which surround the urethra, and serve to strengthen these muscles in an attempt to regain or stave off the worsening of incontinence.

Finding My Pelvic Floor Muscles

When contracted your pelvic floor muscles assist you in stopping the flow of urine by closing off your urinary sphincter and urethra to prevent urine from draining out. To achieve the benefits of Kegel exercises it is important to properly identify these muscles. Be patient as it may take you a few tries to fully identify the pelvic floor muscles. Here are a few methods you can use to locate your pelvic floor muscles



Visualization and Sensation

Getting a full contraction of the pelvic floor muscle is important to properly performing the exercise. It is recommended to practice contracting the front and back portion of the pelvic floor separately before moving on to full contractions. Practicing these first two techniques will allow you to better understand the difference between the anterior and posterior parts to the pelvic floor. However, it's important to note that these two techniques must be used together eventually to achieve a full contract of the muscle.

Anterior Contraction

Imagine drawing a small pebble up through the urethra similar to how a vacuum would (this will assist you in identifying the front portion of the pelvic floor).

Posterior Contraction

Pretend you are trying to hold in a bowel movement or preventing yourself from passing gas and internally contract the anus muscles (this will assist in identifying the back portion of the pelvic floor).

Additional Tips to Assist with Learning Full Contractions

Pretend you are taking a dip into a cold pool of water and as your lower body enters in, tuck the testicles up and inward.

Try to make your penis jump or lift upward while having an erection (close your eyes as you try out these techniques to gain a better sense of what a full contraction should feel like).

Stopping the Flow of Urine

When you go to the washroom, midway through urination try to stop or decrease the flow of urine. If this is done correctly then you have successfully contracted the pelvic floor muscles. It's important to note that this particular technique should only be used to identify the pelvic muscles and should not be done repeatedly (**NO MORE THAN TWICE**).

Performing a Kegel Exercise

When doing your Kegels, remember to visualize and focus on internally lifting the pelvic floor and not clenching/contracting any outer muscles such as the buttocks, abdominals or thighs. Try to isolate the muscle. Breathe naturally, refrain from holding your breath and allow yourself to rest briefly between sets or long held contractions. Described below are two types of Kegel exercises:

Quick and Rhythmic

- Contract and release repeatedly
- Develops pelvic floor strength
- Very important to prevent stress incontinence

Squeeze/Tighten and Hold

- Contract, hold for a few seconds, and then relax
- Develops pelvic floor tone/endurance
- Count 1 one thousand, 2 one thousand, 3 one thousand, etc...
- Strive for a contraction of 5 seconds

How Often Should I Perform Kegel Exercises?

When starting a Kegel exercise routine it may be difficult at first to perform the exercise 10 to 20 times. It does take quite a bit of energy to perform a Kegel and to do so properly, so don't get discouraged as this is normal. Don't overdo it at first because more is not necessarily better. Over fatigued pelvic floor muscles may actually lead to continued or worsened urinary incontinence. Make sure to follow the prescribed exercise protocol recommended by your CEP.

Your Kegel exercises should be performed daily and broken into sets to be executed throughout the day. Your routine will be progressive over the next six weeks, starting at a light intensity and advancing to more moderate intensity repetitions as your pelvic floor becomes stronger. You will eventually be able to handle more intense Kegels and will likely be increasing the total amount of repetitions and holding longer contractions.

When Should I Do My Kegel Exercises?

It may take some time to strengthen the pelvic floor and gain an awareness of this muscle so it's best to learn how to achieve a quality contraction prior to surgery to establish a sensation-based target for after surgery. In doing so you are putting yourself at an advantage to regain your bladder control with less difficulty after surgery. Remember, your pelvic floor muscles are like any other muscle in your body, it takes regular exercise and time to strengthen them. An additional benefit to beginning your Kegel exercises prior to surgery is that while everything is fully functioning you can educate yourself on how the exercise should feel and develop your plan on when and where it's best for you do your routine. After surgery a catheter will be placed in your urethra to allow for urine from the bladder to drain out your penis and it's at this phase after surgery where you should not perform any Kegel exercises. Once the catheter is removed you can resume your Kegel exercises as prescribed by your CEP.

The best thing about Kegel exercises is that they can be done anywhere and at any time with complete anonymity. You can do your Kegels just before getting out of bed in the morning, prior to your daily meals and just before going to sleep in the evening. However, it's recommended to perform the exercises when you are feeling your strongest and this is typically in the morning and afternoon for most men. Dedicate some time during your day to do your Kegels. Kegels can be performed anywhere, but if you really want to get the most out of the exercise, go off by yourself, close your eyes, remove all distractions and focus on the exercise. Set reminders for yourself to do your exercises daily, whether it's a note on your bathroom mirror, or an alarm that goes off in your cell phone.

Will My Urine Leakage Stop If I Do Kegel Exercises?

Kegel exercises have been shown to decrease leakage of urine. Research suggests that most men with prostate cancer re-establish complete urinary continence in 6 to 12 weeks after surgery. However, some men recover urinary control as soon as 4-6 weeks after surgery. Each person's healing time may differ, so don't lose motivation if you continue to leak urine. Some improvements should be expected or you may be preventing your incontinence from worsening which is still a good thing. Engaging in preoperative Kegel exercises is intended to assist you with recovering urinary control as soon as possible after your surgery.

Your Kegel Exercise Prescription

The following section will be taking you through your six week pelvic floor training program. You will be provided with detailed instructions on which type of Kegel exercise to perform and the specific number of sets and repetitions to be completed. Please follow the instructions carefully and speak with your CEP if you are unsure of anything. We highly encourage you to log your Kegel exercises as you complete them throughout the following weeks. To assist you with this please use the exercise log section of this package.

***Week 1 – Anterior/ Posterior Kegels
(Quick Contractions)***

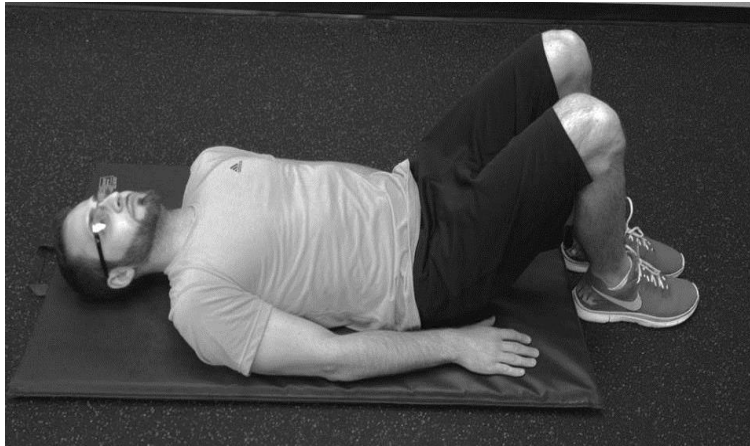


Position (e.g. lying, sitting, or standing)	Reps	Sets	Type of Contraction	Length of Contraction (sec)	Rest between contractions (sec)
Lying	10	2	Quick	1 sec	2 sec

Rx:

- ✓ 1 set = 5 quick contractions followed by 5 long contractions
- ✓ Performed 2 times per day
- ✓ Total daily contractions = 20
- ✓ Rest for twice as long as contraction
- ✓ Lying with knees bent (crook lying position)

Week 2 – Full Kegels (Quick / Long Contractions)



Position (e.g. lying, sitting, or standing)	Reps	Sets	Type of Contraction	Length of Contraction (sec)	Rest between contractions (sec)
Lying	10	2	Quick = 5 reps Long = 5 reps	Quick = 1 sec Long = 5 sec	Quick = 2 sec Long = 10 sec

Rx:

- ✓ 1 set = 5 quick contractions followed by 5 long contractions
- ✓ Performed 2 times per day
- ✓ Total daily contractions = 20
- ✓ Rest for twice as long as contraction
- ✓ Lying with knees bent (crook lying position)

Weeks 3 & 4 – Full Kegels
(Quick / Long Contractions)

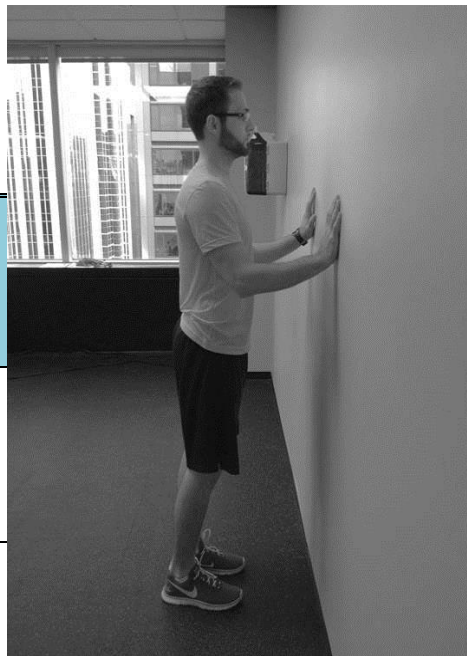


Rx:

- ✓ 1 set = 15 quick contractions followed by 15 long contractions
- ✓ Performed 2 times per day
- ✓ Total daily contractions = 60
- ✓ Rest for twice as long as contraction

✓ Sitting (on a chair, stability ball, etc.)

***Weeks 5 & 6 – Full Kegels
(Quick / Long Contractions)***



Position (e.g. lying, sitting, or standing)	Reps	Length of Contraction (sec)	Rest between contractions (sec)
Sitting	30	Quick = 1 sec Long = 5 sec	Quick = 2 sec Long = 10 sec

Standing	50	2	Quick = 25 reps Long = 25 reps	Quick = 1 sec Long = 5 sec	Quick = 2 sec Long = 10 sec
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Rx:

- ✓ 1 set = 25 quick contractions followed by 25 long contractions
- ✓ Performed 2 times per day
- ✓ Total daily contractions = 100
- ✓ Rest for twice as long as contraction
- ✓ Standing (holding a wall, back of a chair or nothing)

Keeping Track of Your Kegel Exercises

Using an training log is a good way to maintain continuity in your program and your monitor progress. Use the 6-week exercise log to record your Kegel exercises.

Your log is only useful if you use it. It only takes a few moments after your sessions to complete your log. You'll be happy you recorded your progress!

Kegel Exercise Log: SAMPLE							
Date: Feb 2/14 to Feb 8/14							
DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION	Lying	Lying	Lying	Lying	Lying	Lying	Lying
SETS	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
REPS	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
NOTES: _____							

Kegel Exercise Log: WEEK 1

Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____

Kegel Exercise Log: WEEK 2

Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____

Kegel Exercise Log: WEEK 3

Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____

Kegel Exercise Log: WEEK 4

Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____

Kegel Exercise Log: WEEK 5

Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____

Kegel Exercise Log: WEEK 6

Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____

Kegel Exercise Log: _____
Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____

Kegel Exercise Log: _____
Date: _____ **to** _____

DATE	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
POSITION							
SETS							
REPS							

NOTES: _____
