

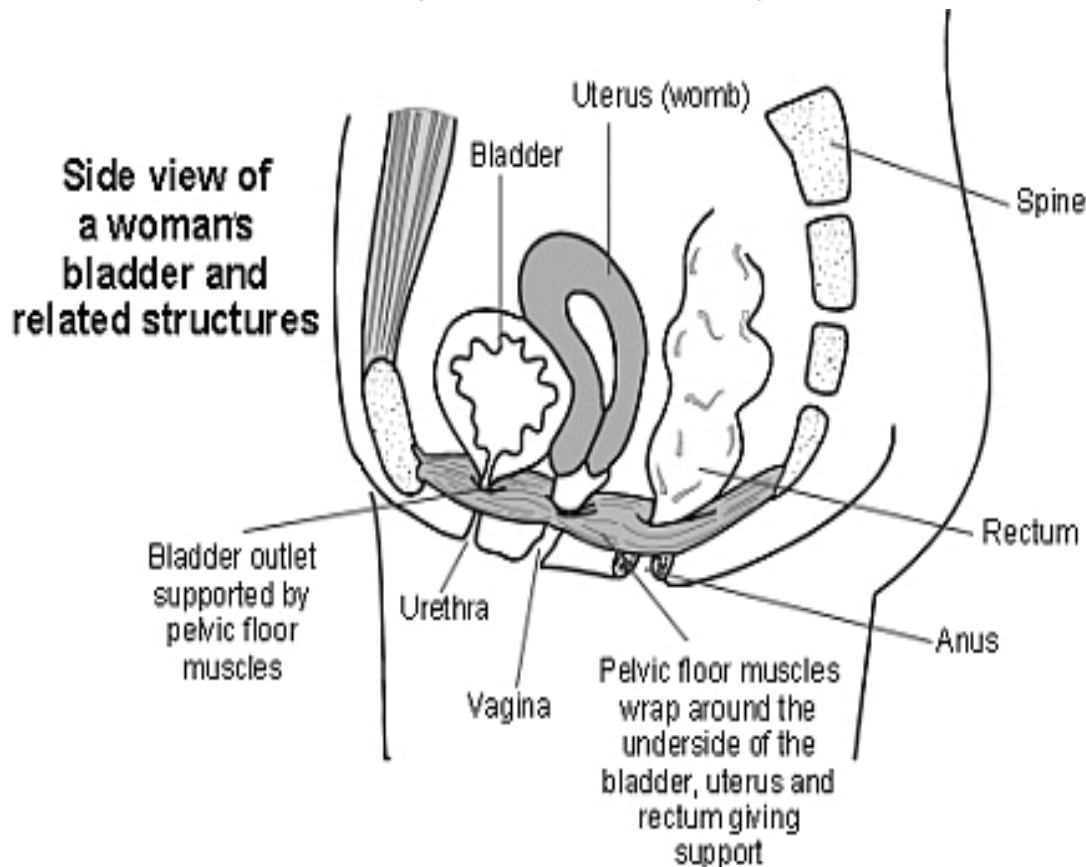


PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE EXERCISES

The pelvic floor muscles are like a sling within the pelvis.

They are attached to the pubic bone at the front and the bottom of the spine at the back.

They encircle the openings of the bladder, vagina and back passage.



They support the organs within the pelvis and help with bladder and bowel control.

REMEMBER: Pelvic floor exercises are for life.

If you have a catheter in it is important not to start these exercises until it has been removed.

- Lie or sit comfortably with your knees slightly apart.
- Tighten and pull up the ring of muscle around your back passage (as if you are trying to stop passing wind) continue pulling towards the front (as if you are trying to stop passing urine).
- Hold this for up to 10 seconds (start with just a few seconds and build up to 10).
- Repeat this exercise up to 10 times if you can (start with 3 times and increase as able).
- After this tighten the same muscles quickly pulsing up and down 10 times.
- **Repeat this group of exercises at least 5 times a day.**
- Building up the exercises and the strength of the muscle can take several weeks so be patient!

When doing these exercises you should not be holding your breath, tightening your tummy or buttock muscles.

To check you are using the right muscles try to slow down or stop the flow of urine mid-stream but **NEVER** more than once a month as it could interfere with normal bladder emptying.

USEFUL TIPS

1. When lifting something, coughing, laughing and sneezing, tighten your pelvic floor muscles.
2. Avoid constipation as straining to empty your bowels can weaken the pelvic floor muscles. Drinking enough fluids, gentle exercise and a balanced diet can help.
3. Avoid being overweight.
4. Try not to go to the toilet just in case, wait until your bladder is full.
5. Ensure you drink enough fluids (1.5-2 litres per day) avoiding too many caffeinated drinks e.g. coffee, tea, cola; these should only make up a small proportion of your daily intake.