

A Guide to Pelvic Floor Exercises

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It is recommended to do daily pelvic floor exercises during pregnancy and after birth. This will help prevent symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction.

Standing every morning

- Stand with your feet slightly apart, the same width as your shoulders
- Stand straight but not rigid, and keep every muscle relaxed so you can focus your effort on the pelvic floor 'elevator' and on the 'doors'
- Start with 10 long pelvic floor exercises (exercise 1), gradually building up from holding the elevator from 5 seconds to 10 seconds
- Follow with 10 short pelvic floor exercises (exercise 2), and remember to start with the doors open, close and take the elevator up, bring it down and open the doors completely before starting the next set
- Next 3 reps of the coughing exercise (exercise 3) don't forget to hold the doors closed as you cough three times, and then open them again
- And end with 3 reps of the pelvic floor relaxation with deep breathing (exercise 4), to help to relax your pelvic floor and to get rid of any tension

Sitting every lunchtime

- Keep your back straight, but not rigid and keep both feet on the floor
- Remember the elevator in the pelvis idea
- Start with 10 long pelvic floor exercises (exercise 1), gradually building up from holding the elevator from 5 seconds to 10 seconds
- Follow with 10 short pelvic floor exercises (exercise 2), and remember to start with the doors open, close and take the elevator up, bring it down and open the doors completely before starting the next set
- Next 3 reps of the coughing exercise (exercise 3) don't forget to hold the doors closed as you cough three times, and then open them again
- And end with 3 reps of the pelvic floor relaxation with deep breathing (exercise 4), to help to relax your pelvic floor and to get rid of any tension

Lying down every evening

- In the evening when you are in bed
- Lie flat, with your legs slightly apart and your arms by your sides

- Start with 10 long pelvic floor exercises (exercise 1), gradually building up from holding the elevator from 5 seconds to 10 seconds
- Follow with 10 short pelvic floor exercises (exercise 2), and remember to start with the doors open, close and take the elevator up, bring it down and open the doors completely before starting the next set
- Next 3 reps of the coughing exercise (exercise 3) remember to hold the doors closed as you cough three times, and then open them again
- And end with 3 reps of the pelvic floor relaxation with deep breathing (exercise 4), to help to relax your pelvic floor and to get rid of any tension

Consider what we need our pelvic floor to support us with

Think about walking around a supermarket holding a heavy shopping basket when you have a cold – you want your pelvic floor to work! Maybe we want to exercise in the gym and do some weight training.

Whilst it is important to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles it is equally important to relax them following exercise completion. We do not want to overwork these muscles - you want them to work functionally so don't wear them out!

Maintaining an optimised pelvic floor is a lifelong approach.

Initially aim to do your pelvic floor muscle exercises between three and five times every day whilst you are strengthening them

Once you feel confident your muscles have started to strengthen reducing these exercises to twice a day consistently will help maintain this.

You can start these exercises when lying or sitting and gradually progress to standing. Sitting is a functional position but standing will be more challenging because of gravity.

Support is available via the Perinatal pelvic health team

Visit [betterbirthlincolnshire.co.uk/pelvic health](http://betterbirthlincolnshire.co.uk/pelvic%20health) for more information or to complete a self-assessment form or speak to your health professional for support with information and referrals.



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