

Kegel Pelvic Floor Exercises for Men

For men before and after robotic prostatectomy

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Important note

The basic information presented here was developed by clinicians. It may differ from your particular situation. This information is intended to be used only in conjunction with professional guidance from healthcare providers.

Why pelvic floor exercises matter

Pelvic floor muscle exercises, often called Kegel exercises, help strengthen the muscles that support the bladder and urethra in men. Strengthening these muscles may help decrease urinary urgency and incontinence. These exercises may be suggested by your doctor before or after certain types of surgery, such as prostatectomy and urinary diversions.

These muscle exercises should be performed before robotic prostatectomy when your surgeon recommends them. Some patients have excellent urinary control after surgery without these exercises, but Dr. Savatta believes they may help many patients regain control sooner. It is often easier to learn the exercises before surgery than after surgery, when leakage may be more noticeable.

How to find the right muscles

First, it is important to find the right muscles. The muscles used for these exercises are the pelvic floor muscles around the urinary and rectal openings.

- Try to stop the flow of urine while sitting on the toilet. If you can do this, you are using the right muscles. Do not make a habit of doing the full exercise while urinating.
- Imagine that you are trying to stop passing gas. If you feel a pulling sensation in the buttocks and rectum, you are likely using the right muscles.
- Do not tighten the thighs, buttocks, chest, or abdominal muscles while doing the exercises. Keep breathing normally.

Once you identify the right muscles, you can do these exercises while lying, sitting, standing, or walking.

The exercise program

- Begin by emptying your bladder.
- Contract your pelvic floor muscles for 3 to 5 seconds.
- Relax the muscles completely for 10 seconds.

- Perform 10 repetitions one to three times a day.
- At first, you may only be able to hold the contraction for a few seconds. As the exercises become easier, slowly increase the length of the contractions.
- Do the exercises every day, but do not overdo it. Over-exercising can cause muscle fatigue and may increase urine leakage.
- Some patients notice improvement over four to six weeks, but recovery varies by patient and surgery details.

Routine examples

- During TV commercial breaks.
- At stop signs or stop lights while driving.
- While standing in line at a store or grocery.
- While standing in an elevator.

Helpful hints

If you have stress incontinence, it may help to think ahead and tighten the pelvic muscles before moments that increase pressure.

- When you feel a cough or sneeze coming on.
- Before you stand up.
- Before lifting objects or exerting yourself.
- When you are laughing.
- For minor leakage, an absorbent pad such as Poise or Depend Guards for Men may help.

Biofeedback

Biofeedback exercises are urinary exercises conducted with a therapist. A probe is used to measure the force of the contraction, and the feedback helps the patient learn the correct motion.

Biofeedback may be prescribed for men who have significant incontinence after pelvic surgery. Some insurance plans provide sessions of biofeedback therapy.

Preoperative biofeedback

Patients with urinary problems, including incontinence before surgery, may benefit from biofeedback. Some studies report benefit for postoperative recovery with preoperative exercises. Discuss this with your surgeon.