



# Exercises to help with bladder and bowel leakage

This leaflet explains some simple exercises you can do to help improve incontinence - leakage of urine (wee) or stool (poo).

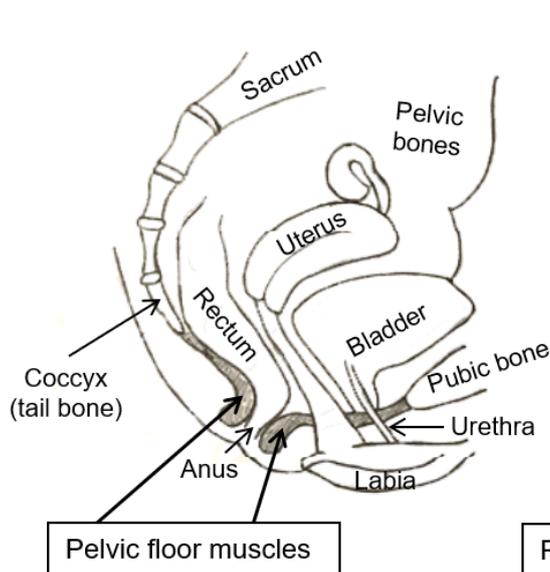
## Why am I leaking wee or poo?

There may be many reasons why you are leaking; however, what we do know is that the muscles that help stop you from leaking get weaker as we get older. Some people accept this leakage as part of getting older, but you can improve the situation if you exercise the right muscles – and you can do it with three 10 minute sessions per day!

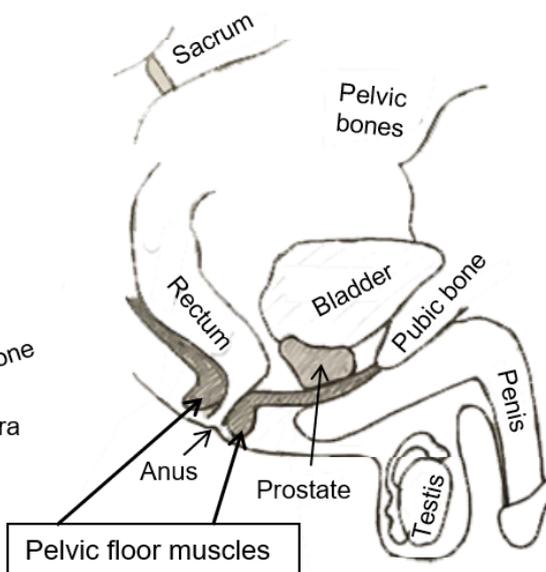
## So, what muscles do I need to exercise?

The muscles you need to exercise and make stronger are called the pelvic floor muscles. Both men and women have pelvic floor muscles. They are the muscles that go from your pubic bone at the front, right underneath and round to your coccyx (tailbone) at the back.

Female pelvic floor



Male pelvic floor



## How do I do the exercises?

You need to do two types of exercises – slow ones and fast ones. This is because the muscles contain two types of fibres – slow ones and fast ones!

## Slow exercises

- **For women:** imagine sitting on a marble. Now, imagine “sucking” that marble up into your vagina. You should feel your vagina and your anus (back passage) tighten and “lift” a little bit – that’s your pelvic floor.
- **For men:** Imagine pulling your testicles up towards your belly button. You should feel your perineum (the area between your testicles and your anus) tighten and “lift” a little bit, and you may feel your penis bob up and down slightly – that’s your pelvic floor.

Now, do that squeeze again and try to hold on to it for three seconds. Then relax for three seconds. Repeat that 10 times, and you have made a start on the slow exercises!

When three seconds becomes easy, gradually increase it until you can hold the squeeze for 10 seconds. Eventually you should be doing 10 x 10 second holds.

## Fast exercises

These are exactly the same squeeze as for the slow exercises, but this time you only hold it for one second. Relax for three seconds in between each one second hold, and repeat it 10 times. So you should be doing 10 x one second holds.

The above exercises should only take you about 10 minutes, but you need to remember to do them **three times per day**. We know that if you do them less than this, they often do not work.

## How soon can I expect improvement?

All muscles take time to train up. Don’t expect overnight results. You may start to see some improvement after 6-8 weeks if you have been consistent with the exercises, but **you will need to keep exercising the muscles every day for the rest of your life**. Think of it as a habit, like cleaning your teeth!

## Further information

You can get further information on incontinence from:

- The POGP (Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy) [Patient Information | POGP \(thepogp.co.uk\)](http://thepogp.co.uk)
- Bladder and Bowel UK [Bladder & Bowel UK home page - Bladder & Bowel UK \(bbuk.org.uk\)](http://bbuk.org.uk)

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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