

✦ Core Support

Exercises to strengthen and tone your pelvic floor



Bridge Pose

1. Lie down on your back with your knees bent and your feet hips-width apart. Place your arms alongside your body with your palms facing down.
2. Inhale. As you exhale slowly lift your hips up towards ceiling to come into a bridge position.
3. Once you are in bridge position, inhale, then on an exhale engage your kegel and pull your abdomen toward your spine. Hold this for 5-10 seconds.
4. Slowly come out of bridge and inhale; then repeat.
5. Repeat for a total of four repetitions

Plank

1. Begin lying on your belly with your legs straight back behind you. Prop yourself up on your forearms. Spread your fingers wide and bring your forearms parallel to one another. Tuck your toes under and engage your abs and thighs
2. Inhale to pick your hips up off the floor as you press into your forearms. Bring your hips parallel to your shoulders.
3. Hold for 30 seconds as you breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. At the end of every exhale, engage your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles.



Bird Dog

1. Begin with your hands and knees in a table-top position. Stack your shoulders over your wrists and spread your fingers wide. Stack your hips over your knees and keep your toes untucked.
2. Inhale as you reach your right arm straight forward and your left leg straight back. Lift your right hand up in line with your right shoulder and turn your palm inward. Lift your left foot in line with your left hip and flex the foot.
3. Hold for a slow count of three, then release back to the starting position.
4. Inhale to switch sides, lifting your left hand up and your right leg up. Hold for a slow count of three, then release back to the starting position
5. Repeat for eight reps on each side

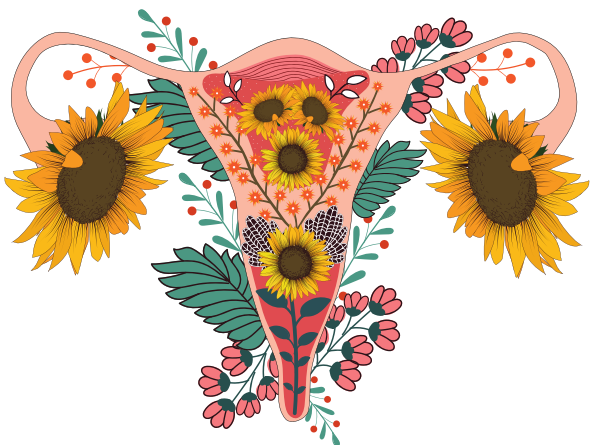


Side Clamshell

1. Lie down on one side with your hips stacked and your knees bent. Rest your head on your bottom arm and place the top hand on the floor in front of you.
2. Engage your abs and pelvic floor muscles by drawing your navel up and in towards your spine. Keep your feet together as you separate your knees and open your top knee like a clamshell.
3. Stretch the knee out as far as you can comfortably and pause for a moment, then slowly come back to the starting position.
4. Repeat for 10 reps on each side.

Toe Taps

1. Start lying on your back with your knees bent, your feet off the ground, and your shins parallel to the ground.
2. Inhale and lower your right toes to tap the ground, then exhale to engage the pelvic floor and lift the leg back up to the starting position.
3. Repeat with the left toes, inhaling to lower and exhaling to bring back up. Remember to engage the pelvic floor.
4. Repeat for eight reps on each side



Reverse Kegel

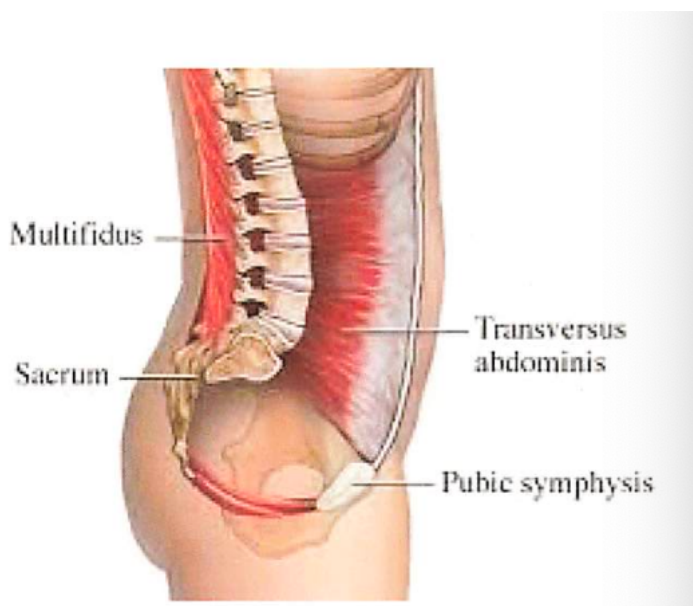
This helps you to relax and release the pelvic floor muscles.

1. inhale feeling your belly expand and your ribs expanding in every direction
2. Exhale feeling your belly contract. You can add a "shhh" sound as you exhale if that helps.
3. Imagine a balloon in your abdomen and your pelvis filling up as you inhale.
4. As you exhale (shhh) feel your belly and pelvic floor lift. This is not a contraction, just a lift like a balloon deflating.
5. Inhale and feel the balloon in your pelvic floor expand with a gentle dropping of the pelvic floor



Core brace Exercise: Training the Trunk Muscles

This is **not** a maximal effort exercise. It is an exercise for your inner core that will work your pelvic floor, abdomen and back muscles at the same time while breathing.



- Position yourself on the floor or bed with your back slightly curved away from the floor. This is “neutral position.” You want to keep the natural curve in your spine and avoid from flattening your low back toward the floor
- Focus on your pelvic floor muscles at the base of your pelvis. To contract them, imagine that you are slowly shutting off the flow of urine, partially blocking gas from escaping and closing the vagina. This contraction creates tension around your bladder, anus and vagina.
- While you hold the pelvic floor contraction, add in the lower belly muscles (transverse abdominis) without moving your back or pelvis. Do this by imagining that you are zipping up pants that are too tight for you.
- Next, engage the muscles around your spine (multifidi) by imagining zipping up your back muscles from the tailbone up to the rib cage. This will create support for the back.
- Start by holding this contraction (pelvic floor, transversus abdominis and multifidi) for 5 seconds, working up to 10 seconds. Do 10 repetitions of these.
- You can breathe in and out during these contractions. Continue to progress until you work up to 30 repetitions per day.



Pelvic Floor Relaxation Exercises



Supported Reclined Butterfly
(tip: place pillows under your knees for extra support)



Butterfly pose *(tip: place blocks or pillows under your knees for extra support)*



Deep Squat *(tip: place a low stool or pillow under your bottom for extra support)*



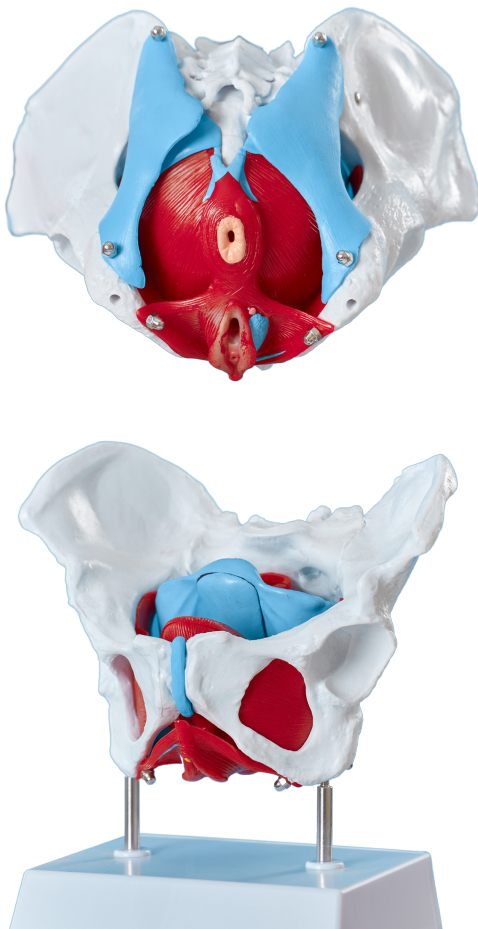
Happy Baby Pose *(tip: use a belt, yoga strap or neck tie if you to help you reach your feet)*



Kegels

Before you begin!

Please do not begin the following exercises until you have had an internal pelvic floor evaluation and your practitioner has recommended you incorporate kegels into your exercise routine.



How to do a kegel:

1. Sit in a chair with your feet resting on the floor or lie down with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Relax all of the muscles of your thighs, buttocks, and abdomen
2. Squeeze the muscles around your anus, as if you are trying to stop from passing gas. Hold for a count of three, then relax the muscles again. Make sure that you are not squeezing your glute (butt) muscles.
3. Now, imagine you are trying to stop a stream of urine. You should feel a squeeze and inward lift of your genitals. Hold for 3 seconds, then release the muscle again.
4. Now combine steps two and three, squeezing the ring around your anus and feeling the inward lift of the vagina at the same time. Hold for 3 seconds, then release both muscles.

Sustained Kegel/ Slow Twitch Muscle fibers:

1. Follow instructions above to engage a kegel on an exhale. Hold for ___ Seconds. Relax for 3 breaths. Repeat ___ x/day.

Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers:

1. Follow the instructions above to engage a kegel. Quickly squeeze and release your pelvic floor muscles
2. ___ Repetitions. Rest for a few breaths. Repeat ___ times.