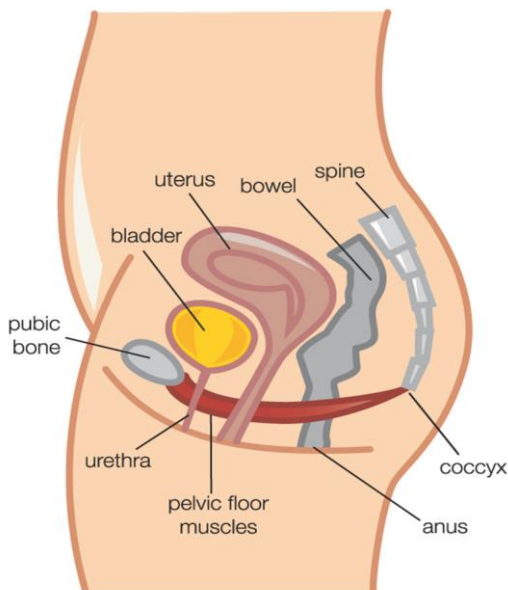


The Power of your Pelvic Floor



What are pelvic floor muscles?

Pelvic floor muscles hold your bladder, womb and bowel in place, supporting these like a hammock. They also control your bladder and bowel.



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<https://www.continence.org.au/pages/pelvic-floor-women.html>

Why should I do pelvic floor exercises?

The muscles can become weakened during pregnancy. Strengthen these muscles to help;

- **improve bladder and bowel control**
- **support your growing baby**
- **learn to relax to help push your baby out**
- **improve sensation during sex**

Pregnancy and the pelvic floor

The pelvic floor muscles help to support your baby when you are pregnant and can help you give birth to your baby.

How do I find my pelvic floor muscles?

Try to tighten the muscles. The feeling is of **squeeze and lift**, closing and drawing up the back, middle and front passages.

Imagine trying to stop passing wind or urine.

Then **let go and relax.**

Use your thumb or index finger to feel inside your vagina to see if you can feel the muscles tightening around them.

Use a mirror – if you see any bulging STOP and check with your midwife.

If you are sexually active, you could try asking your partner if they can feel the squeeze.

Remember ...

- Squeeze and lift **as hard as you can**
- Start with **as many as you can**. This might be just **4 seconds**.
- **Relax** your tummy, buttock and legs when you do your pelvic floor exercises.
- **Breathe normally.**
- Keep practicing and **build up to more.**
- **Squeeze and lift** your pelvic floor muscles **before you cough, sneeze, laugh, jump or lift** something heavy — this is called “the knack”.

Aim to do pelvic floor exercises

2 times in a day

8 times in a row

Hold for 8 seconds

Rest for 8 seconds in between



Make it part of your daily routine!

Remembering to exercise can be a challenge.

Try to find ways to **make it part of your daily routine**, for example:

Brushing your teeth

Sitting at traffic lights

Waiting for the kettle to boil

Cuddling your baby

If you feel you have a weak pelvic floor... you are not alone!

One in three women struggle to control their bladder.

Passing a small amount of urine when you cough, sneeze or exercise is very common, but **you don't have to put up with it!**

Leakage may be common, but it is never 'normal'.

Ask your midwife!

All women should be told about pelvic floor exercises and how they can help you.

If you have any further questions, just ask!

[Watch these videos](#) or use the QR code to learn more about pelvic floor muscle exercises in pregnancy and how to do them.



If you find the exercises difficult or they don't seem to be working after six-12 weeks, talk to your midwife or GP. They can refer you to a physiotherapist or provide you with other support.

Others who can help you:

Specialist physiotherapists
Practice nurses and your GP
Each other!

