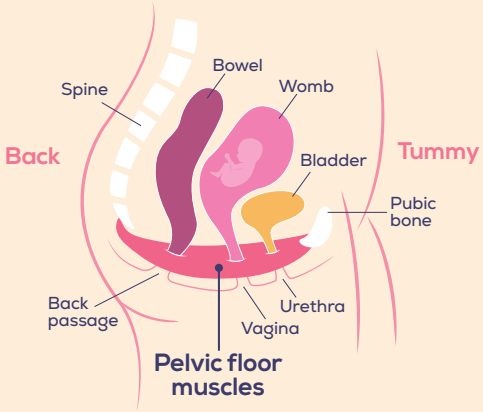
The Power of your Pelvic Floor



What are pelvic floor muscles?

Your pelvic floor muscles support your **bladder, womb, and bowel,** like a hammock. They also **help you control** your bladder and bowel when you cough, sneeze, or laugh.



How do I find and squeeze my pelvic floor muscles?

- To tighten your pelvic floor muscles, **squeeze and lift** – like stopping wind or the flow of urine. Then **relax**.
- **Feel the difference:** squeeze and lift, then letting go.
- **Use a finger** inside your vagina to feel the squeeze.
- **Use a mirror** to check – if you see bulging, stop and ask your midwife.
- If you are sexually active, **ask your partner** if they feel the squeeze too.

Why should I do pelvic floor exercises in pregnancy?

These muscles support your baby and can help you give birth. The muscles can become weak when you are pregnant. Strengthen your pelvic floor muscles to help:

- Improve **bladder and bowel control**.
- **Support** your growing baby.
- **Relax** when you give birth.
- Improve **sensation** during sex.

If you leak, you are not alone

1 in 3 women and birthing people **accidentally leak urine**.

It is **common** but it is not '**just part of pregnancy**'. You can do something about it.

Ask your midwife for help.

Learn how to do pelvic floor exercises

Scan the QR code to watch our videos.

Build your routine

- **Squeeze and lift** up to 8 seconds.
- **Rest** for 8 seconds.
- **Repeat** 8 squeezes (this completes 1 set).
- Aim for **2 sets daily**, or at least **2 times** a week.
- **Remember: 2 and 8 is great!**

Top tips

Squeeze and lift **as hard as you can**.

Breathe normally.

Feel the muscles let go as they relax in between the squeezes.

Start small - even 4 seconds, 4 in a row is a good start.

Relax your tummy, buttocks, and legs when you squeeze.

Squeeze and lift your pelvic floor before coughing, sneezing, or lifting – this is called **"the knack"**.

Missed a day? Don't worry. **Just restart**. **when you can**!

Make it a habit

Choose ways to remember to do pelvic floor exercises.

Try doing a set of exercises before and after:

- Showering.
- Brushing your teeth.
- Boiling the kettle.
- Or watching TV.

Need help?

Ask your midwife or doctor.

If you are finding it difficult (or painful) to do the squeeze and lift, or the exercises are not helping after 3-6 weeks, ask to see a pelvic health physiotherapist. Your maternity team can help arrange this.

Visit **APPEALpelvichealth.com**

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APPEAL
Antenatal Preventative Pelvic floor Exercise And Localisation programme

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