

## **Kegel Pelvic Floor Exercises**

### **How to do the Classical Kegel exercise:**

**Find the right muscles.** To identify your pelvic floor muscles, stop urination in midstream. If you succeed, you've got the right muscles. Once you've identified your pelvic floor muscles you can do the exercises in any position, although you might find it easiest to do them lying down at first.

**Perfect your technique.** Tighten your pelvic floor muscles, hold the contraction for five seconds, and then relax for five seconds. Try it four or five times in a row. Work up to keeping the muscles contracted for 10 seconds at a time, relaxing for 10 seconds between contractions.

**Maintain your focus.** For best results, focus on tightening only your pelvic floor muscles. Be careful not to flex the muscles in your abdomen, thighs or buttocks.

**Avoid holding your breath.** Instead, breathe freely during the exercises. Repeat three times a day. Aim for at least three sets of 10 repetitions a day.

**When to do your Kegels.** Make Kegel exercises part of your daily routine. You can do Kegel exercises discreetly just about anytime, whether you're sitting at your desk or relaxing on the couch.

### **THE PELVIC TILT**

While standing, tilt your pelvis forward and backward. As you thrust forward, contract your abs and glutes, and exhale. Release and inhale as you tilt back. Do eight slow reps, followed by eight fast reps.

### **THE HIP ROLL**

Do the same breathing technique as above, seated, up tall and in neutral, swing your hips from side to side instead of straight forward and back. Repeat eight times slowly and then at a faster pace. This is also good on a beanbag raising one hip up.

### **THE HIP HITCH**

Hitch your hips in one direction eight times, and then switch directions for eight repetitions. Make sure your butt muscles and lower abdominals are engaged the entire time.

### **THE PUSH**

Do the Classic Kegel, but instead of simply releasing your PF muscles when you exhale, forcefully push out.

## **THE BRIDGE**

Lie flat on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the ground hip-width, and arms straight down at your sides. Little fingers only on the floor. Contract your pelvic floor muscles. Lift your pelvis and contract your PF muscles. With your PF still engaged, lift and lower your bent legs off the ground, as if you were marching—first the left leg, then the right leg. Once you've lifted each foot five times, release your PF and lower to the ground. Do three sets.

## **THE SIDE LEG LIFT**

Lie on your left side, with your left knee slightly bent, and your right leg extended straight out on top of it, heel flexed. Contract your PF muscle. Raise your right leg up and down five times, and each time you lift, maintain the contraction of your PF. Change sides.

## **THE LYING CLAM**

Lie on your back with your knees bent and drawn in toward your chest. Open your bent legs out to the sides as far as they will go. Inhale, contract your PF muscles, and tilt your pelvis slightly forward. Release your PF as you return your legs to centre. Do three sets of five reps.

## **THE BREATH OSSCILATOR**

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position, with your spine straight and your hands on your knees. Close your eyes, contract your PF, and take a series of 15 short, fast inhales and exhales through your nose. Then relax and breathe normally.

## **THE BIRTH MOTHER**

Lie on the floor, bend your knees out to either side, and touch your heels together. Then grab your feet and pull them toward your chest, heels still touching, knees still wide. Contract your PF and hold for a count of 20. A great inner thigh stretch as well.

## **THE WILD CHILD**

Finally, get into a child's pose (like you do in yoga) but with legs like a frog with your knees far apart. Rotate your pelvis forward, contract your PF. Hold for 20 seconds.