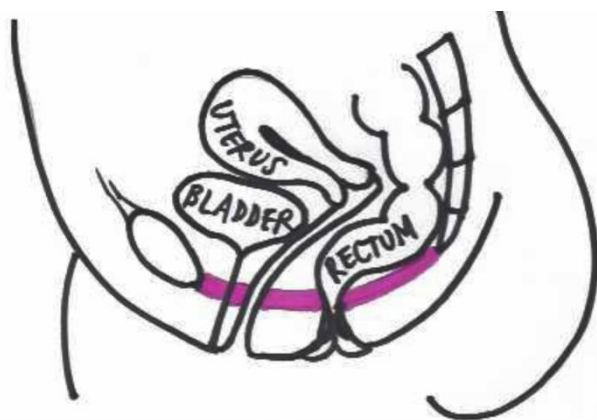


# Pelvic Floor Exercises for Women

This leaflet provides information about pelvic floor exercises for women. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

## What are the pelvic floor muscles?

Your pelvic floor is a group of muscles found at the base of your pelvis. These muscles attach from your tailbone to your pubic bone to form a bowl like shape.



They support your pelvic organs and surround the openings of the vagina, bowel and bladder helping maintain continence and enhance sexual function.

## What are the signs and symptoms of Pelvic Floor dysfunction?

- Stress incontinence (leaking urine during exercise or when coughing, sneezing or lifting)
- Urgency (a sudden strong desire to pass urine)
- Prolapse (a heaviness / dragging in the vagina).

It is extremely **important to exercise your pelvic floor muscles** to prevent problems with incontinence (leaking of urine), prolapse (bulging of one or more of the pelvic organs into the vagina), lower back / pelvic pain and increase sensation during intercourse.

## How do I exercise my pelvic floor?

There are two main forms of pelvic floor exercises: long holds and fast squeezes. They are both equally important - the long holds aim to improve endurance and the short squeezes aim to improve your reactivity. While sitting or lying, slowly tighten the muscles around your anus and vagina, lifting up and in as if trying to stop yourself from passing wind and urine.

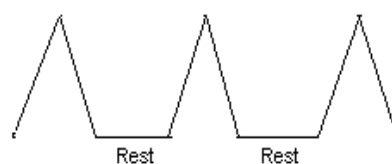
**Long Holds:** To build up the endurance of these muscles, hold this contraction for as long as you can (up to 10 seconds) and then fully relax. Relax for as long as you have squeezed.



Try to build up to hold for 10 seconds x 10 reps.

**Short Holds:** Draw up and tighten your pelvic floor muscles as quickly as you can and then relax fully. Repeat up to 20 times.

Try to do both exercises three times a day.



It is important to do this **without**:

- Clenching your jaw
- Holding your breath
- Excessively pulling your tummy muscles in
- Squeezing your inner thigh or buttock muscles.

## Is there anything else I can do to help myself?

The “Knack” is a technique where you squeeze the pelvic floor to help prevent leaking for example when you cough, sneeze, bend over or pick something up.

If you have any concerns around your pelvic health, please speak to your GP who can refer to your local pelvic health team.

### **Useful sources of information**

NHS [How to help a weak bladder - NHS](#)

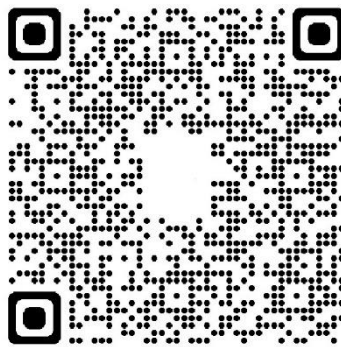
NHS recommended “Squeezy” app

[Home Page - Squeezy \(squeezyapp.com\)](#)

Pelvic Health Resource Page

[Patient Resources - St George's University Hospitals NHS](#)

[Foundation Trust \(stgeorges.nhs.uk\)](#)



**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

**Was this information helpful? Yes / No**

**Please let us know, contact**

**[patient.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk) and include the leaflet title.**

**Thank you.**

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure

everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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