

REDUCING URGENCY

When you feel the urge to empty your bladder...

First: **STOP** and stand very still. Sit down if possible. Staying as still as you can will help control the urge.

Second: **TIGHTEN** your pelvic muscles 3 to 5 times. Take a deep breath and as you let it out, allow your body to let go and **RELAX**. Think of something other than the bathroom.

Third: **WALK**, when the urge has decreased somewhat, to the bathroom at a normal speed.

If the urge happens again on the way to the bathroom, **STOP** and repeat the above steps.

Do not be discouraged if you do not see results at first. You are learning a new skill. Try practicing these steps at home until you feel comfortable with your new skill.

PELVIC MUSCLE EXERCISES FOR WOMEN

What are the pelvic muscles?

Pelvic muscles are the muscles that span the pelvis from the pubic bone, in front of the body, to the tailbone, in the back of the body. Pelvic muscles provide support to the urethra, bladder, uterus, vagina and rectum.

What are pelvic muscle exercises?

Pelvic muscle exercises will help you tighten up and strengthen the muscles that surround the opening of the urethra, vagina and rectum. These exercises work only when the right muscles are used and enough repetitions are done. If you have a problem with incontinence, it may take up to three months for you to see an improvement. They can help prevent leakage with activity (stress incontinence) as well as overactive bladder (urge incontinence, urinary urgency and frequency).

How do I find these muscles?

Do not identify the pelvic floor muscles by trying to stop and restart the flow of urine. Instead, notice the muscles you use when you voluntarily pull in on your rectal muscles to retain gas. You can also find these muscles by placing a finger in the vagina and squeezing your vaginal muscles around it, while keeping the other hand over the lower abdomen to make sure you don't squeeze the muscles of your abdominal wall. Do not tighten the abdominal, thigh, or buttock muscles when tightening the muscles of the pelvic floor.