



Kegel Exercises

Kegels: Keeping your pelvic floor strong

- are very important for both pregnant and postpartum women.
- involve contracting and relaxing the pelvic floor muscles in a regular and controlled fashion – similar to stopping and starting the flow of urine.
- help strengthen the pelvic floor when they contract and lift the delivery canal.
- ensure healthy vaginal tissue and assists with urinary control while pregnant, during delivery and postpartum.

Points to remember:

- the pelvic floor contraction (Kegel) is made up of three parts: the urethral, vaginal and anal contraction. When tightening the pelvic floor (kegel) the vaginal canal and anal area is contracted along with the entire pelvic floor.
- practicing the release of the pelvic floor muscles may assist with the function of the large intestine and defecation which may help to prevent the constipation that can plague many pregnant women.
- it is as important to perform the **release or relaxation phase** as it is to perform the muscle contraction.
- when you first contract you will engage the entire pelvic floor and surrounding area, but you must learn to relax your pelvic floor during a contraction when in labour.
- contractions in labor are a tightening of the uterus that may cause a general contraction of the entire abdominal region. The contracting uterus helps to push the baby down in the final phase of labor, but if the pelvic floor is tightened this may hinder the progression of labor.
- you should incorporate Kegels into your cool-down routine to ensure they are not forgotten.
- sitting on an exercise ball, Sissel disc, foam roll or rolled towel will give you an unstable base of support and make the exercises more challenging.
- remember that the **quality** of these exercises, not the quantity, is most important.

Do not practice Kegels while urinating as this may lead to a bladder infection.