

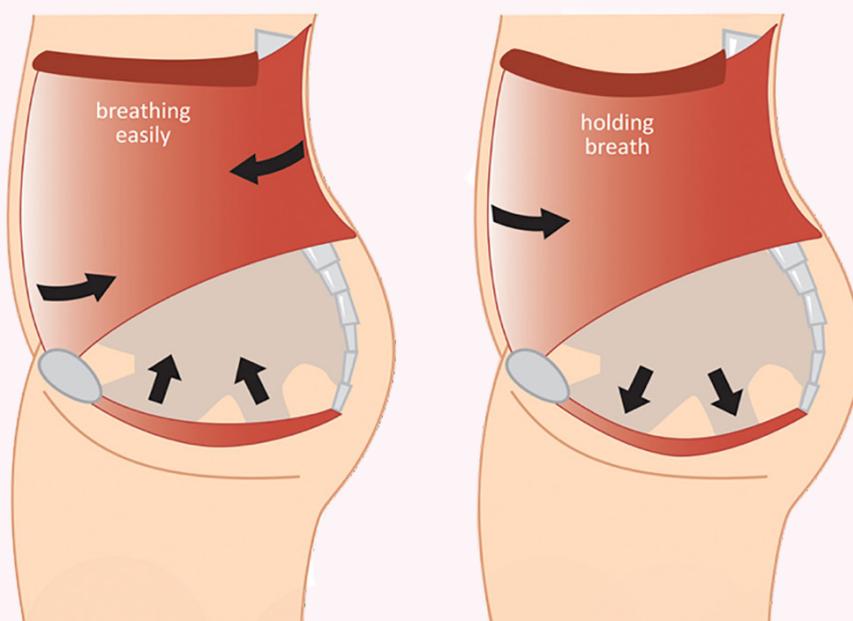
PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

GETTING THE TECHNIQUE RIGHT

Before you start your pelvic floor exercises it's important to learn how to identify your pelvic floor muscles to ensure you can perform the exercises correctly.

- Imagine letting go like you would to pass urine or to pass wind. Let your tummy muscles hang loose too. See if you can squeeze in and hold the muscles inside the pelvis while you breathe. Nothing above the belly button should tighten or tense. Some tensing and flattening of the lower part of the abdominal wall will happen. This is not a problem, as this part of the tummy works together with the pelvic floor muscles.
- Try tightening your muscles really gently to feel just the pelvic floor muscles lifting and squeezing in. If you cannot feel your muscles contracting, change your position and try again. For example, if you cannot feel your muscles contracting in a seated position, try lying down or standing up instead.
- After a contraction it is important to relax the muscles. This will allow your muscles to recover from the previous contraction and prepare for the next contraction.
- It is common to try too hard and have too many outside muscles tighten. This is an internal exercise and correct technique is vital. Doing pelvic floor muscle exercises the wrong way can be bad for you, so please see a health professional if you cannot feel your muscles hold or relax.

PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE CONTRACTION



Correct action
The pelvic floor lifts, the deep abdominals draw in and there is no change in breathing

Incorrect action
Pulling the belly button in towards the backbone and holding your breath can cause bearing-down on pelvic floor

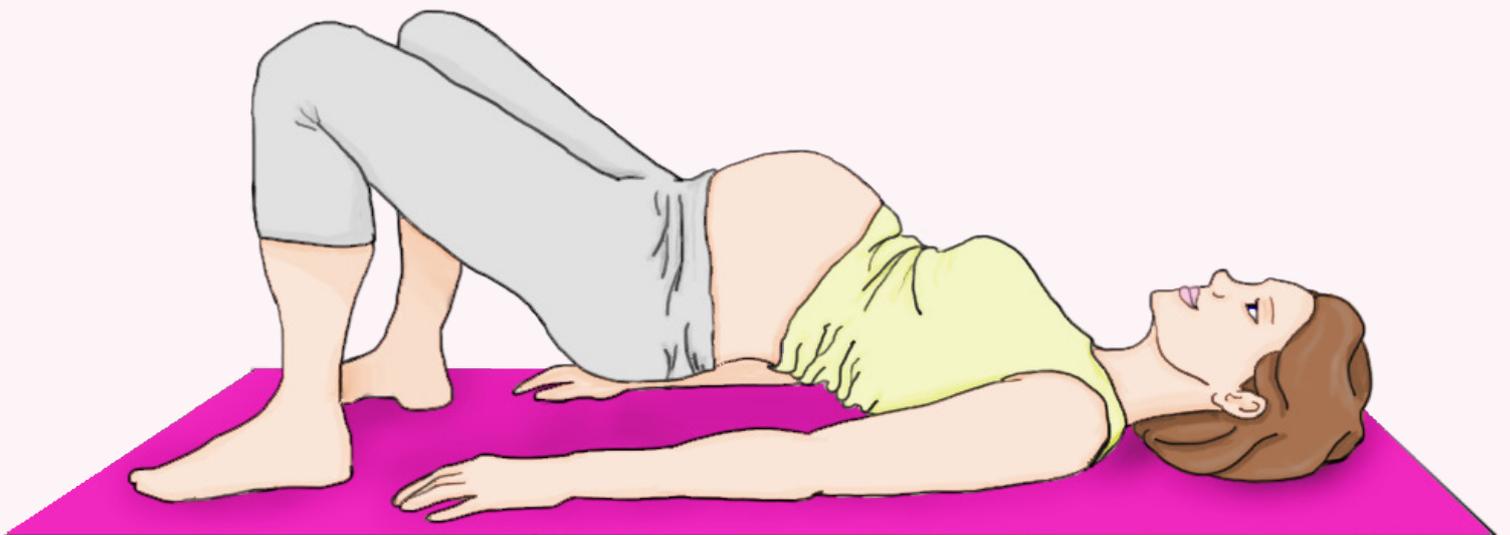
PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

Pelvic floor exercises are an important and effective way to help maintain your pelvic floor strength during and after pregnancy and help reduce the risk of developing prolapse. Please note, it is always important to talk to your doctor or healthcare professional before starting any form of exercise while you're pregnant.

Pelvic Floor Squeezes

You should do pelvic floor squeezes three times each day for the rest of your life. Here's how:

- Start by lying on your back or side (try sitting and then standing once it gets easier for you).
- Squeeze, lift and hold your pelvic floor upwards and forwards towards your pubic bone tightening around the anus, vagina and urethra.
- Start by holding for 3 seconds or more (build up to 10 seconds) and rest for the equal length of hold time.
- Repeat the squeezes 8-12 times (one set).
- Remember to keep breathing during the squeezes.



Yoga Poses

The three-step sequence below is beneficial to practice for helping to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles, and can also aid in relieving lower back pain. You can begin this exercise from 14 weeks of pregnancy. Please remember if any position becomes uncomfortable for you stop doing them and always seek advice from a healthcare professional before starting a new exercise.

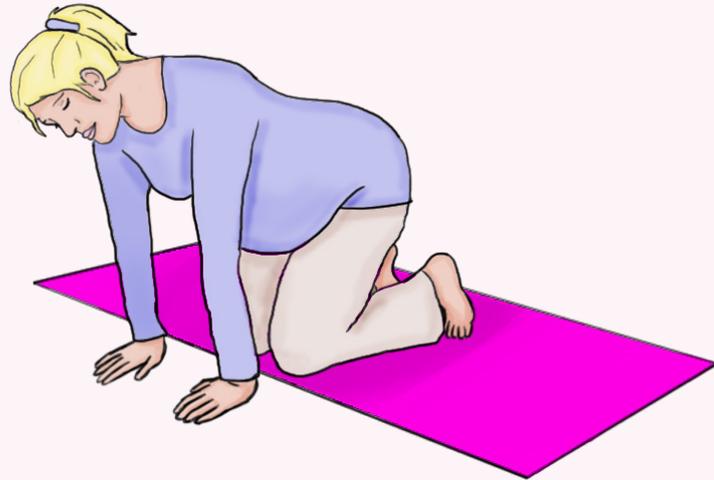
STEP ONE

Start in a kneeling position. Sit back on your heels. Keep your toes together and lower your heels outwards and apart, so that you are sitting on your feet. Place your hands, palms down, on your thighs. Look straight ahead, keeping your back straight and your ears in line with your shoulders and hips.



STEP TWO

Bend forward and use your hands to balance yourself on the floor in front of you. Raise your hips and curl your toes so you come onto the balls of your feet, then rest your hips back down on your heels.



STEP THREE

Now place your hands on your thighs with your palms down. Breathe gently and sit in this position for as long as is comfortable. To release, gently bend forward again and uncurl your toes, kneeling down to sit back on your feet once more (as in step 1). Relax your arms and focus on your breathing.



References

- <https://www.babycenter.com.au/v1036695/vajrasana-or-thunderbolt-pose-video>
- <http://www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au/pages/pelvic-floor-muscle-exercises-for-women.html>
- <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/Publications/having-a-baby.pdf>