

Your pelvic floor muscles stretch from the front of your pelvis at the pubic bone to the tailbone at the back and between the sit bones. These muscles play an important role in bladder and bowel regulation, sexual function, and pelvic organ support.

It's important to be able to activate the pelvic floor muscles for times when you need to hold or delay urination or bowel movements, AND it's important to relax the pelvic floor muscles for times when you need to empty your bladder or bowel.

### **Tips for Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercise:**

- The quality of the exercise is more important than the number you perform. Don't rush!
- Avoid using your buttock, or leg muscles while you exercise the pelvic floor muscles.
- Relax your body and breathe during your exercises. Avoid breath holding by counting out loud while performing the exercises.
- Coordinate your breathing and pelvic floor muscle activation by exhaling or letting your air out while you contract your pelvic floor muscles.

### **How to Perform Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercise:**

- Choose a comfortable position that allows you to focus on your body.
- Take an inhale breath allowing your abdomen and ribs to expand.
- As you exhale or blow out choose a visual cue (listed below) to help visualize your pelvic floor muscles activating.

### Visual cue options:

- Close your vagina and lift inward as if zipping up a pair of pants to your waistline.
- Imagine the labia of your vagina as doors to an elevator. Close your doors and imagine your elevator going up towards your belly button.
- Envision your vagina holding onto a blueberry, and slowly pulling the blueberry inward.

### **Rest between pelvic floor muscle contractions.**

It's important to fully rest your muscles between muscle contractions, vary the positions you practice in, and take your time!

### **How many do I perform?**

Quick Contractions: these are squeeze and let go.

1-second quick squeeze  
5-second rest in between  
10-15 reps/1-2x per day

Long Holds: these involve a muscle contraction with breathing as you hold.

10-second endurance hold  
10-second rest in-between  
10-15 reps/1-2x per day

### **Key Points:**

Take your time so you build strength slowly, vary the positions you practice in, and try to contract your pelvic floor muscle contraction on the exhale breath to optimize muscle activation.