

## PERFORMING PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

Pelvic floor exercises are also called pelvic muscle or Kegel exercises. With regular exercise of these muscles you can build muscle strength, endurance and coordination.

### STARTING PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

- Relax your body and breathe during your exercises. Holding your breath makes it more difficult to exercise correctly. Do not strain (try too hard), bear down or hold your breath as you do the exercises. Coordinate your breathing with your pelvic floor contraction by blowing out or exhaling while you contract your pelvic floor muscles. Count out loud to avoid straining.
- **Isolate the muscles.** You should not see or feel other muscle movement when performing pelvic floor exercises. If done properly, no one else can tell if you are doing the exercise. Keep the buttocks, belly and inner thighs relaxed.

### POSITION FOR THE EXERCISES

- Start lying down with your knees bent and supported with pillows.
- Once you've gained awareness and can feel the contractions you may perform the exercises either sitting or standing.

### PERFORMING THE EXERCISE

- Place your hand on top of your pubic bone.
- Tighten and draw in the muscles around the anal opening and, for women, also the vaginal opening. You will feel the muscles lift towards your pubic bone and squeeze the openings shut.

### TYPES OF EXERCISES

There are two types of exercise contractions you should perform:

1. Quick contractions where you tighten, lift and release.
2. Endurance contractions where you tighten, lift and hold the muscles for up to 10 seconds.

### EXERCISE FREQUENCY

- In general, you should perform a total of 30-80 of these exercises per day.
- Talk to your health care provider about a specific exercise program to fit your needs.