



# Pelvic floor muscle exercises for women



Let's yarn about women's business

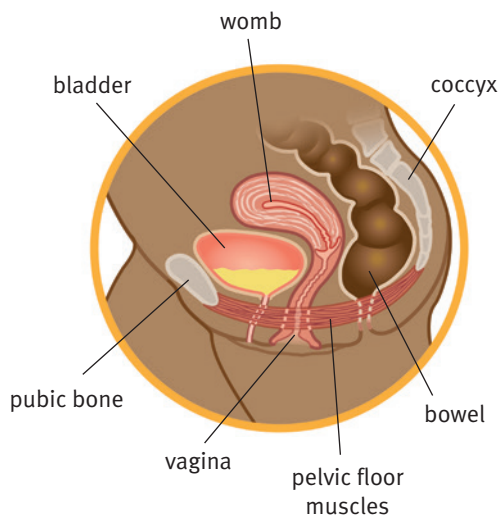


## The pelvic floor muscles

The pelvic floor muscles are important for holding onto your wee and poo. They hold up the bladder, womb and the bowel.

These muscles are between your legs and around your vagina and bottom. They stretch from the pubic bone (at the front) to the coccyx (tailbone at the back).

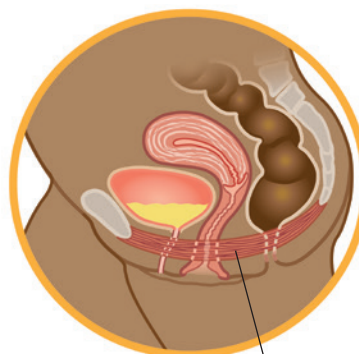
If these muscles are weak, wee and poo can leak out.



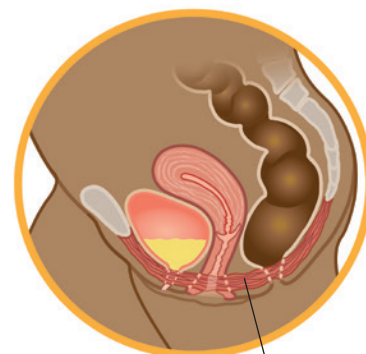
## Your pelvic floor muscles get weak from:

- being pregnant and having babies
- constipation (hard poo) and pushing to empty your bowel and do a poo
- being overweight
- lifting too many heavy things
- coughing a lot (such as with asthma or a smoker's cough)
- getting older.

Weak pelvic floor muscles can lead to a prolapse. This is when the womb, bladder or bowel sags down into your vagina.



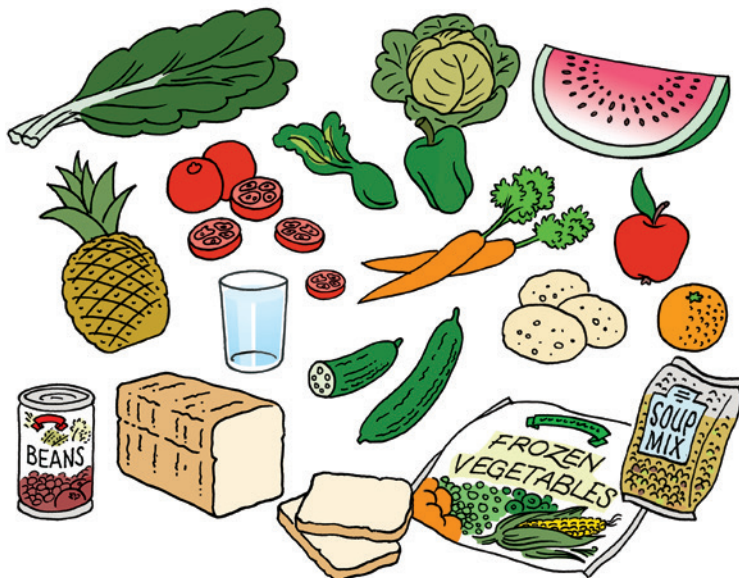
normal pelvic floor muscles



saggy pelvic floor muscles

## Things you can do to help

- Eat healthy food.
- Drink fluid every day. Fluid is everything you drink. Fluid includes milk, juice and soup. The best fluid to drink is water.
- Exercise every day.
- Get help if you are lifting heavy things.
- Get help to give up smoking.



- If you are coughing a lot, ask for help from your health worker, nurse or doctor.
- Learn to do pelvic floor muscle exercises.
- Squeeze up and hold your pelvic floor muscles before you sneeze, cough or lift.



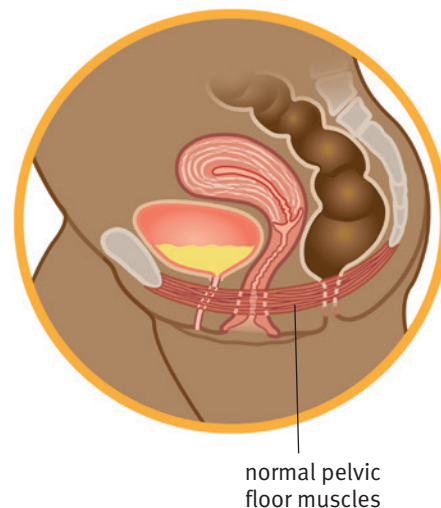
## How to do your pelvic floor muscle exercises

It's important that you work the right muscles. If you are not sure if you are exercising the right muscles, talk to your health worker, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor.

Try to do this exercise:

- Tighten the muscles around your bottom and vagina and lift them up inside. This is like holding in wee or stopping a wee once it has started.
  - Try to do both of these front and back muscle pull-ups at the same time.
  - Hold on for 8 seconds or as long as you can.
  - Try to do these exercises at least 3 times every day.
- 
- You **should** feel:
    - a lifting up from below
    - a squeezing and lifting in the muscles around your vagina and bottom.
  - You **should not** feel:
    - your buttocks squeezing together
    - you are holding your breath
    - your stomach muscles moving.

You can do these exercises any time of the day, such as when you are washing your hands, in the shower or when you are sitting and talking.



## **Make the exercises part of your daily life**

You will need to work hard at these exercises.

It takes time to build your strength.

Good times to do them are while you are washing your hands, watching TV or sitting down and talking with other people.

Get into the habit of doing these exercises.

Your health worker, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor can help you.

It is important to ask your health worker, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor for help if you:

- rush to get to the toilet to wee or poo
- have burning or stinging if you pass wee
- have to push to make the wee start
- can't hold in wind
- have discharge or smell from your vagina.

Talk to your health worker, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor



### Who can help?

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service
- Health workers
- Nurses
- Physiotherapists
- Doctors
- National Continence Helpline **1800 33 00 66**

### Notes



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This series of brochures has been designed for use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

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