



Exercise for Pregnancy, Childbirth and Postpartum

KEGEL (KAY-gul) EXERCISE

The most important of all!

Purpose

By strengthening the muscles around the vagina, the Kegel exercise will increase your ability to control and relax these muscles completely.

How To Do The Kegel Exercise

1. To get the feel of the muscles, stop and start your urine when you use the toilet.
2. Try to tighten the muscles a small amount at a time, "like an elevator going up to the tenth floor." Then release very slowly one "floor" at a time.
3. Try to tighten the muscles from front to back. Include the anus (rectum) as you did in number 2.



When To Practice

- Practice while you sit, stand, walk, drive or watch TV.
- Do these exercises three times each day – morning, afternoon and evening.
- Start with five repetitions each session. Work up to 20 to 30 each time.

KNEE PRESS

Purpose

The knee press will strengthen your inner thighs, stretch your lower back, and improve your circulation.

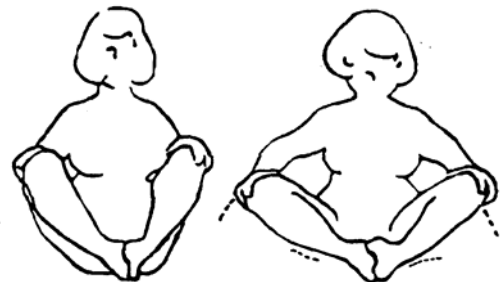
How To Do The Knee Press

1. Sit on the floor.
2. Now pull your feet together with soles touching.
3. Bring your feet as near to your body as you can with comfort.
4. Keep your back straight.
5. Press your knees slowly and gently to the floor.
6. Hold your knees to the floor and count to three.



When To Practice

- As often as possible during the day, sit cross-legged on the floor with your back rounded and relaxed.
- You could do this as a break during TV commercials.
- Work up to doing 10 repetitions each day.



ABDOMINAL STRENGTHENERS

Purpose

Abdominal strengtheners will strengthen and stretch your abdominal (*tummy*) muscles and improve your circulation.

Leg Raise

1. Lie on your back with feet flat on the floor.
2. Bring one knee up to your chest as close as you can.
3. Raise your leg in the air.
4. Bend your knee and return your foot to the floor.
5. Do the same exercise with your other leg.

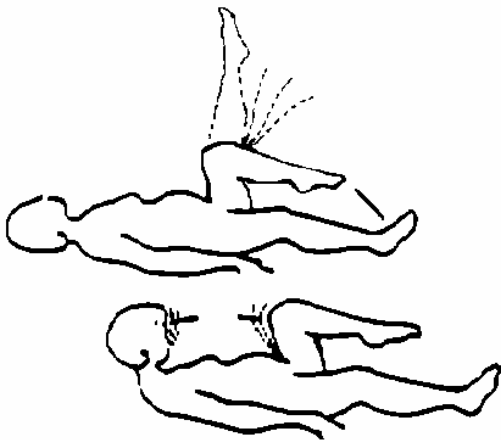
Knee Reach

1. Lie on your back with feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your head and at the same time move one knee towards your nose.
3. Do the same thing with your other leg.



When To Practice

- Repeat both exercises 10 times each day.



THE PELVIC ROCK

Purpose

The pelvic rock will strengthen your abdominal muscles, relieve backaches and improve your circulation.

How To Do The Pelvic Rock

This exercise is done in three different positions. Each time you do the exercise, tighten your abdominal muscles and tuck your buttocks under so that the small of your back is pushed back as far as possible.

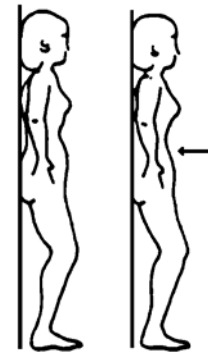
Position One

1. Get on your hands and knees with arms straight.
2. Tighten your tummy muscles and tuck your hips under. Your back will hunch a little.
3. Relax.
4. Do this slowly and evenly.



Position Two

1. Stand with your back against a wall.
2. Tighten your tummy muscles and tuck in your buttocks so the small of your back is flat against the wall.
3. If you put your hands on your hip bones, you should feel your hips rock.



Position Three

1. Lie on your back with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Tighten your lower tummy muscles and your buttocks to press the small of your back onto the floor.
3. Relax.
4. Repeat slowly and evenly.



Adapted From *Nine Months to Get Ready... You Can Make a Difference*, the Arizona Department of Health Services.