

## Pelvic Floor Exercises for Patients with a Temporary Stoma

### Maintaining Pelvic Floor Control after Stoma Formation

The muscles that are found in the lower abdomen (pelvic region, see diagram) are important in controlling the normal bowel action of faeces out through the bottom (anus).

When a stoma has been formed, the anal muscle and the pelvic floor muscles are not used for several months.

If the muscles are not exercised, then it is possible that regaining control of your bowel after reversal of the stoma may prove difficult and you may experience problems with bowel continence.

Therefore, we would suggest that you try to follow these simple exercises over the coming months to aid a smooth return to normal bowel function once you have had the stoma reversed.

Some patients also find that they may experience a feeling of fullness in their rectum after the formation of a temporary stoma. This is normal. Some people will pass a clear or lightly stained jelly (mucus), others may pass some normal bowel contents (faeces). These simple exercises will aid the passing of this and help to keep the bottom muscles toned.

### How to do the Pelvic Floor Exercises

1. Sit comfortably with knees slightly apart. Without moving your tummy muscles or bottom, try to squeeze the muscle around the back passage. Pretend you are trying to stop wind from escaping!
2. Now try the same with the front part of the muscle. Squeeze and lift the muscle at the vagina or between the scrotum and anus. This is a harder exercise and takes practice.
3. Once you can lift the muscles (and feel movement between your legs), **PULL** as hard as you can and **HOLD** for a count of **1, 2, 3, 4, 5** seconds (each person is different) then **RELAX**. When you relax, make sure you feel the muscles relax.

**Repeat this 5 times** with a rest in between.

Aim to do this **4 times a day**.

4. Also try to 'twitch'/'flick' (which is to tighten and relax the muscle without holding) the same muscle. Then relax. Repeat this whenever you can during the day.

Your Stoma Care Nurse will be happy to explain these exercises to you and can be contacted at:

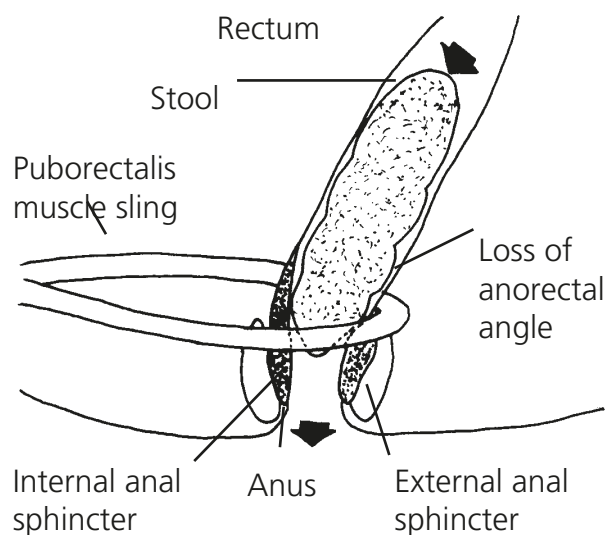
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## Diagram of the Pelvic Floor Muscle Controlling the Exit of Stools



The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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