

Pre-Surgical Exercises

During your Pre-operative Pelvic Floor Physiotherapy Assessment, your therapist will ask questions related to your bowel, bladder and sexual function, and if warranted, will provide exercises and strategies to help improve your symptoms. In addition, the Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist will provide you pre-surgical exercises to help improve your overall post-surgical outcomes.

Hamstring Stretch



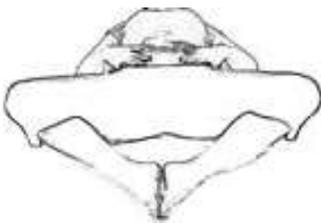
1. Start by lying on your back.
2. Use your arms to lift one leg up towards the ceiling, you should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh.
3. You may use a belt, towel or scarf to pull your leg closer to you, for a deeper stretch.
4. **Hold for 30 seconds, 3 sets. Repeat on both sides.**

Hip Stretch



1. Start by lying on your back. Interlace your legs, starting with your left leg over the right leg.
2. Bring your knees up toward your chest, making sure that you are breathing through this stretch.
3. Interlace your hands either behind your right thigh or over your right knee. Slowly start bringing legs toward your body. You should feel a stretch in your left buttock area.
4. To increase this stretch, use your right hand over your left foot to bring the leg toward your body.
5. **Hold for 30 seconds, 3 sets. Repeat on both sides.**

Inner Thigh Stretch



1. Start by lying on your back.
2. Put your feet together and open your knees to the side. Breathe gently as you feel the stretch in your inner thighs.
3. To lessen the intensity of the stretch, you may use two pillows/towels underneath your knees to support your legs.
4. **Hold for 30 seconds, 3 sets.**

Hip Flexor Stretch

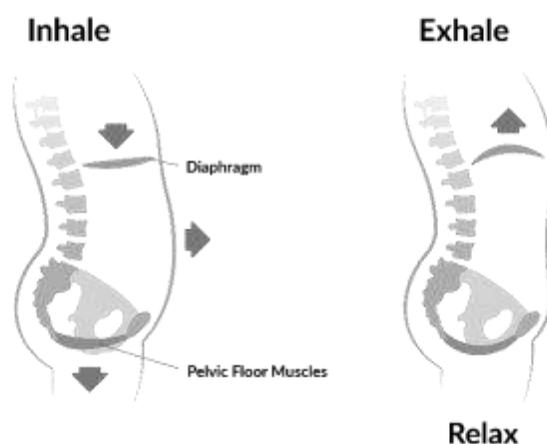


1. Start in a half-kneeling position with right leg forward.
2. Slowly sink weight forward over right knee as you open the front of your left hip. Maintain a neutral back.
3. You can hold onto a chair or stick for stability.
4. **Hold Stretch for 30 seconds, 3 sets. Repeat on the left side.**

Reverse Kegels/Pelvic Floor Drops and Breathing

Your ability to have conscious release of the **pelvic floor muscles (PFMs)** is a critical part of your recovery program. You must learn to focus on and relax these muscles so you can dilate more comfortably. Relaxing your pelvic floor, or reverse kegels is also called **downtraining**. The feeling of dropping your pelvic floor is similar to the moment of relief when you have reached the bathroom; when you urinate or have a bowel movement, you first relax and let the muscles go. The key to dropping your pelvic floor is **visualization**, and **deep breathing**. The best way to consciously release tension from the PFMs is to try to release the muscles while you inhale.

When you inhale properly with diaphragmatic breathing, your diaphragm lowers to make room for the air, so it is natural to also lower and relax the pelvic floor muscles. When you exhale, your diaphragm rises to push the air out, and you can then gently lift your PFMs.



If you have difficulty with coordinating the in-breath with the release, **DON'T** let that stop you. It is perfectly alright to do a reverse Kegel with exhalation at first until you master the correct techniques.

The most important thing is to increase your awareness and focus and to practice reverse Kegels on a daily basis, even an hourly basis if needed. You must learn to drop or lengthen your pelvic floor fully.

Eventually, once you have mastered the art of relaxing your pelvic floor muscles, you will need to check in with your pelvic floor throughout the day and let go of any tension that you discover