

## A Brief Introduction



My name is Heath Prentice and I would like to welcome you to the first monthly PREP Blog. I am an Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP) with over four years experience working with men who have prostate cancer.

Each month I will focus on a different topic, starting this month with the Pelvic Floor. The Pelvic Floor has an important role in recovery from the many side effects from prostate cancer treatments, including incontinence and erectile dysfunction.

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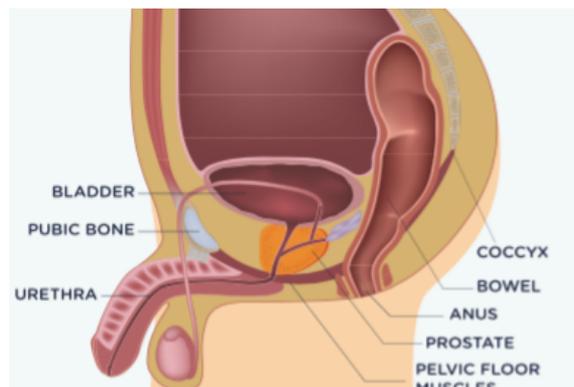
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## Why Pelvic Floor Exercises Are Important

The pelvic floor is situated at the bottom of the pelvis and is made up of three muscle layers. These muscles are stretched out like a hammock and support the bladder, prostate gland and rectum. Following surgery the pelvic floor muscles can be damaged or weakened, which is an issue as pelvic floor muscles have numerous functions including:

- Regulating incontinence
- Sexual function and stimulation
- Plays a key role in core stability



# Top 3 Pelvic Floor Exercises For Beginners



## 1. Elevator - 2 x 3 Reps

- In a standing position gently engage the pelvic floor to an effort or 'level' of 5 out of 10 slowly and release.
- Work up through each 'level' one by one, until reaching a 10 out 10 contraction or maximal squeeze.
- Hold this maximal contraction for 3 breaths and then release, repeating 3 times.

## 2. Pelvic Tilts - 2 x 15 Reps

- Lay flat on back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Flatten out the natural arch in lower back by tilting the hips downwards and engaging pelvic floor.
- Release pelvic floor contraction and allow lower back to lightly arch again.



## 3. Pelvic Bridge - 2 x 8 Reps

- Lay on back with knees bent and feet flat on the ground, engage the pelvic floor muscles and slowly flatten the lower back against the floor.
- Slowly lift the pelvis off the floor and 'peel' the spine off the floor one vertebrae at a time engaging the pelvic floor muscles.
- Stop peeling up when the weight transfers to in between the shoulder blades and then slowly start to come back down one vertebrae at a time.



PREP always recommends consulting your health professional/doctor prior to starting any exercise program.  
 \*Please refer to our disclaimer on Page 3 of this Blog

## Benefits of Pelvic Floor Exercises

1. They assist with incontinence and erectile dysfunction: two of the most common side-effects following treatments.
2. They are low impact and can be done at any age.
3. Time efficient, can be done in as little as 10 minutes.
4. No equipment or gym memberships required.

## Pelvic Floor Activation

When attempting to engage your pelvic floor muscles it is easy to allow the abdominal muscles to take over and dominate the desired movement.

Pelvic floor muscles when contracted have a 'squeeze and lift' action, so it is important to keep this in mind when trying to activate these muscles.

Techniques that are useful to try when performing a pelvic floor contraction are:

- Sitting or lying down and relaxing all your muscles, then imagine trying to bring your 'nuts to guts'  
Going to the toilet and trying to stop urinating mid-stream
- Imagine wading into very cold water and 'lifting up' as the water gets to upper leg level
- Squeeze the ring of muscle around your anus without squeezing your buttocks



## What to Avoid

- **Pushing down** – To engage the pelvic floor muscles correctly it is a squeeze and lift type movement
- **Squeezing too hard** – This can cause other muscles (the abdominal muscles) to activate and not train the pelvic floor muscles effectively
- **Thinking more is better** - Performing too many pelvic floor exercises can cause fatigue
- **Lack of rest** – Allow up to 60 seconds of rest in-between each set of exercises. This will ensure that the muscles recover and can continue to be worked.



These exercises can be found in the Prostate Rehabilitation Exercise Program (PREP), which provides further detailed information, weekly exercise programs and many more exercises specifically designed to assist men recovering from prostate cancer treatments.

I would like to thank you for subscribing to the monthly blogs, for any further information please feel free to email me at [heath@prostaterehab.com](mailto:heath@prostaterehab.com)

\*Disclaimer: For Educational and Informational Purposes Only. Before starting any exercise program please check with your doctor and clear any exercise changes with them before beginning. We expressly disclaim responsibility to any person or entity for any liability, loss, or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly as a result of the use, application or interpretation of any material provided.