



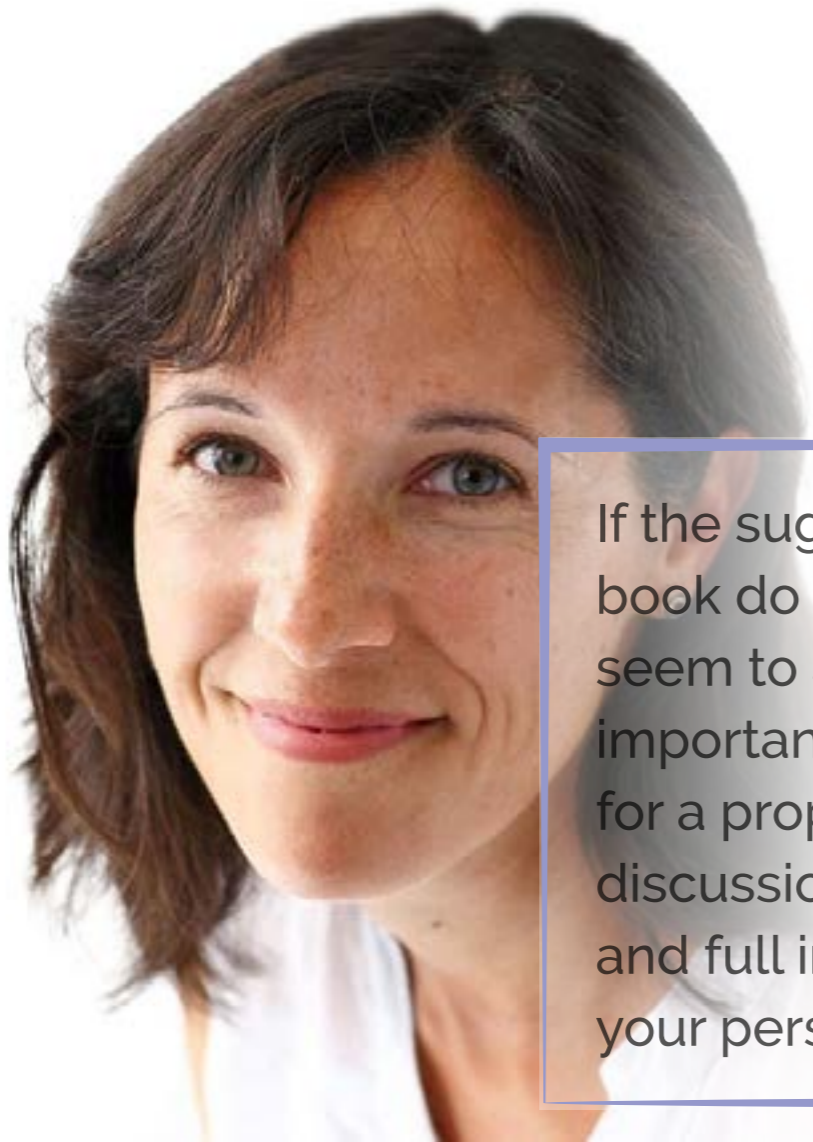
Always by your side

Dealing with Sexual Intimacy issues

A guide to reinvigorating your sex life, increasing the sensation for both you and your partner.

Written in collaboration with Amanda Savage, one of the UK's leading pelvic health specialists. MCSP MSt (Cantab).





If the suggestions in this book do not help you or seem to apply to you, it is important to see your GP for a proper examination, discussion of the issues and full investigation into your personal situation.

Hello & welcome

You can regain your self-confidence and sexual relationships. Our sexual wellbeing and intimate relationships (with ourselves or others) are important. However, it is easy to quickly adapt to things not being "right". Accepting a less than good experience as our new normal.

Our bodies change slowly through life. We all have a unique journey from puberty, through menopause to our old age. We are also shaped by our sexual experiences, and some by pregnancy and childbirth, illnesses, medical conditions and surgical procedures.

In this guide we explore some common problems and their usual solutions. These can be surprisingly easy such as exploring the use of personal lubricants, your choices of position, pelvic floor exercises and the power of communication.

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If you are avoiding intimacy because there is a deeper problem with your or your partner's libido, or physically something is stopping you even trying (this could be a physical block, an injury, scarring, pain in the vagina or anus, an infection or bleeding) this should not be ignored.
If you want to have sex but feel you can't then NOW is the time to take action.

Vaginal Looseness and Lack of Sensation

Vaginal looseness and lack of vaginal sensation are usually closely linked. There are many highly sensitive nerve endings in the skin and tissues of the vulva, clitoris and vagina opening. This is why foreplay and touch are such an important part of intimacy and reaching a state of arousal.

There are not as many nerve endings within the vagina. You will feel aware of “pressure” and “deep touch” more than light sensations. Sexual pleasure of penetrative sex comes from the rubbing and build-up of friction against the vaginal walls.

The vaginal walls at the base and the sides are layered with the pelvic floor muscles. These muscular walls can become weakened and stretched with childbirth experiences or, over time, from repeated coughing, straining from constipation or carrying a lot of weight. The hormone changes of menopause and natural aging processes also change the elasticity of the walls.



It is important to regularly exercise the pelvic floor muscles.

These muscles need to have good tone and firmness to make the space feel tight and close to your partner, for the pleasure nerve endings to get activated. They also need to be able to relax fully for comfortable penetration and deeper contact with your partner.

Clues that lack of pelvic floor tone might be a problem for you are:

- It feels a bit dull and boring inside during sex
- You want to grip your partner but nothing happens
- You feel there is too much room inside (you might also notice this with tampons or sex toys)

Regular pelvic floor exercises will:

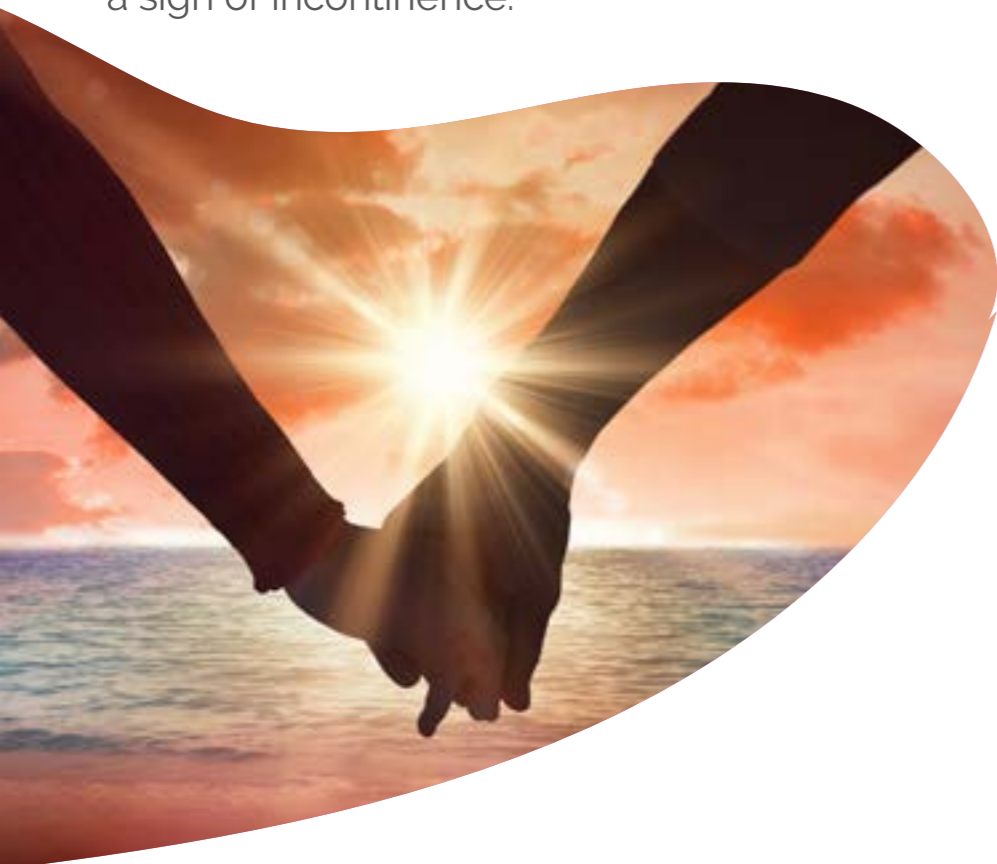
- Bring blood flow to the area to nourish the tissues & improve nerve sensitivity
- Improve your ability to relax the perineum and vagina
- Help you become aware of your internal and external muscles, improving your sensitivity and ability to use your muscles actively during sex
- Strengthen the muscle tissue for better tone and closure (see page 11)

Coital Incontinence

Most people are familiar now that the bladder or bowel can leak when coughing, sneezing, jumping or trying to get to the toilet in time. Bladder leaks can also occur at different points of your sexual experience. Some people experience incontinence during the more active part as they move about or try certain positions, others experience leakage during orgasm or some may have both.

How to identify incontinence

Female ejaculation can be an off-white fluid that is either produced on its own or mixed with urine, which can often make it difficult to differentiate between leakage and arousal. Female ejaculation is fairly odourless. If you can detect a smell of urine this may be a sign of incontinence.



Staying sexually active with bladder worries

- Empty your bladder before and after you are intimate. This is also advised to help prevent UTIs (urinary tract infections).
- Sex can be messy anyway. A little preparation may give you more peace of mind. A small leak may not worry you if you have sheets or a towel that you know will be easy to whisk away afterwards.
- For the more adventurous, try having sex in the shower. This removes any worry of leakage as the water will simply wash away any potential urine. Just be sure to take safety precautions, like purchasing an anti-slip mat and avoiding any oily products.
- Practise pelvic floor exercises (Kegels) regularly to improve your pelvic muscle strength and bladder control. Do some exercises to “warm up” and prepare the muscles before you get intimate. (see page 11)
- Most of all remember to communicate with your partner. Being open and honest about your bladder control or worries will help you be more confident and work together to feel secure.

Pain and Discomfort

If sex is painful it is not your fault. And it can be sorted.

It is easy to fall into a pain-avoidance cycle. If you experience pain when you have sex, your body recoils from the idea of sex again. Your partner doesn't want to hurt you either so may draw away from intimacy too. But feelings of rejection, disappointment, fear and anxiety can add to the vicious cycle.



Common causes of painful sex are

- Lack of natural lubrication making it uncomfortable for body parts to slide and glide past each other (see page 10 for recommendations)
- Vaginal atrophy (thinning of the tissues lining the vagina due to age or hormone changes)
- Uncomfortable stretching of sensitive tissues of the vulva or vaginal opening such as childbirth scars, surgical scars or previous areas of trauma.
- Tension in the pelvic floor muscles and surrounding muscles (gluts, inner thighs, hamstrings) making it difficult to relax to let things in and out, or causing spasms or cramp sensations. (see page 12 for tips how to release tension in the pelvic floor)
- Joint problems (eg stiff lower back or hips) making it difficult to get into position comfortably, or creating tension or pain when you sustain a posture.
- Sexual positions which don't suit your personal anatomy. If you have developed some prolapse (movement of the uterus or vaginal walls) or have changed partner or developed a back problem you may need to explore variations or modifications to suit you. (see page 13 for suggestions)
- Infection in the area, or associated with inflammation from a nearby area (such as a urinary tract infection).
- Fear, anxiety and stress have a big impact on sexual pleasure. Be open and honest with your partner. Or you may need to seek professional help with these areas.

Three things you can do now to improve your intimacy, comfort and enjoyment after having a baby



When you are busy with a new-born baby, sex can drop quite low on your 'to do' list. If it isn't even comfortable when you do find the moment, it is all too easy to lose the intimacy in your adult relationship. Try these 3 simple steps:

1. Pelvic Floor Exercises Improve Sexual Health Too

Commit to a couple of weeks of daily pelvic floor exercises to bring about proper change in these muscles.

The pelvic floor muscles play an important role in giving you a sense of closure around your partner as well as support and friction to create your own pleasurable sensations.

Taking time out to deliberately exercise the pelvic floor muscles will bring blood flow to the area, tone and tighten the muscles and improve your ability to feel the walls of the vagina during sex.

Many women report they are able to reach orgasm more easily, and that their orgasms are more powerful, after focusing on pelvic floor muscle exercises. Not sure where to start? See our playlist on YouTube.



Kegel8®
Pelvic Floor Exercise
Techniques

2. Keep a personal lubricant in your bedside table drawer

The hormone changes of pregnancy and breastfeeding can leave your body surprisingly dry at the vaginal opening and deeper inside.

When you are trying to grab a quick sexy moment, with maybe less time than usual to get in the mood, your body may not produce enough natural lubrication.

This can make penetration painful or the movement of your partner inside you can feel like a friction burn.

Using a personal lubricant during your foreplay (it works best if you put it on both of you) can make a magical transformation to your comfort and enjoyment.

3. Talk to Your Partner

You can and will enjoy comfortable sex again – but you must be brave to let your partner know what you are experiencing.

The Impact of Menopause on your Sex Life

At this stage in life your attitude to sex may change with some women enjoying more fulfilment whilst others may not enjoy sex as much. Changes in hormone levels can have a number of affects including;

- Making your vaginal tissue drier and thinner resulting in uncomfortable or painful sex
- Reducing your libido or sex drive
- Disrupting your sleep due to night sweats and frequent visits to the toilet
- General mental health can be impacted
- Reduction in body confidence

1. Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle

A few small changes to your routine can make a big difference. Being active increases energy levels and improves your mood. Avoid smoking and alcohol as they impact your body. 'Eat the rainbow' as the range of nutrients will benefit your health. Keep hydrated to ensure your body is balanced. Adopt a good sleep pattern to help your physical and mental health.

2. Keep a personal lubricant in your bedside table drawer

If your body is not producing enough natural lubrication this can make penetration painful and the movement of your partner inside you can feel like a friction burn.

Using a personal lubricant on both of you during your foreplay can make a magical transformation to your comfort and enjoyment.



3. Talk to Your Partner

You can and will enjoy comfortable sex again – but you must be brave to let your partner know what you are experiencing.

4. Talk to Your GP

About your exact situation and whether there are any investigations or hormone management options that might suit you.

The quality of personal lubricants is key



Reducing Vaginal Dryness

With all the hormonal changes women experience, from pregnancy and breastfeeding, through the changes associated with the perimenopause to general ageing, you may find that your body no longer makes enough natural lubricating secretions for the vagina opening and the vaginal tube. Sex without enough lubrication in this area can distort and drag creating a friction burn, pain and discomfort.

The quality of personal lubricants is key and it is important to ensure that they are pH balanced to the normal vaginal pH of between 3.8pH and 4.5pH. Lubricants with a higher pH are too alkaline and can lead to UTIs, Thrush and Bacterial Vaginosis.

Spending more time on foreplay and using lubricants, oestrogen gels and pessaries are amongst the most popular forms of treatments for vaginal dryness.



Kegel8 Miracle Balm Natural Intimate Care

A beautifully nourishing intimate balm that restores and revitalises dry, thin vulva tissue

[Shop Miracle Balm >](#)



MENISSIMO Water Based Lubricant

Replenish your body's intimate moisture and relieve your vaginal dryness and discomfort

[Shop Lubricant >](#)



GYNTIMA Vaginal Suppositories

Vaginal probiotic to help balance vaginal pH levels & protect against bacterial vaginosis, infection and odour

[Shop Vaginal Probiotic >](#)

Exercise Your Pelvic Floor to Ease All Conditions

Research has shown us that most women can massively improve the strength, tone and skills of their pelvic floor muscles by simply doing pelvic floor exercises (also known as Kegels).

A strong healthy pelvic floor supports your pelvic organs to prevent prolapse, helps closure of the bladder tube to prevent leaks, and helps you control bladder urges. The pelvic floor muscles also have to release to fully empty the bladder and bowel. You need to be able to both contract and relax the muscles for comfortable sex and sexual pleasure.

Kegels

A Kegel is basically a pelvic floor contraction, achieved by squeezing and lifting the pelvic floor muscles.

Try this; tighten the muscles around your anus and vagina and lift them upwards towards your navel. Imagine you are trying to stop wind or hold in the contents of your bladder. Can you do it?

If you find yourself squeezing your legs together, or tensing your buttocks, this is a sign you haven't located the correct muscles, and may need some assistance - see page 11. If you are confident that you've performed a Kegel, then you can start to do them regularly to improve your muscle strength, co-ordination and ability to relax too.

Pilates & yoga

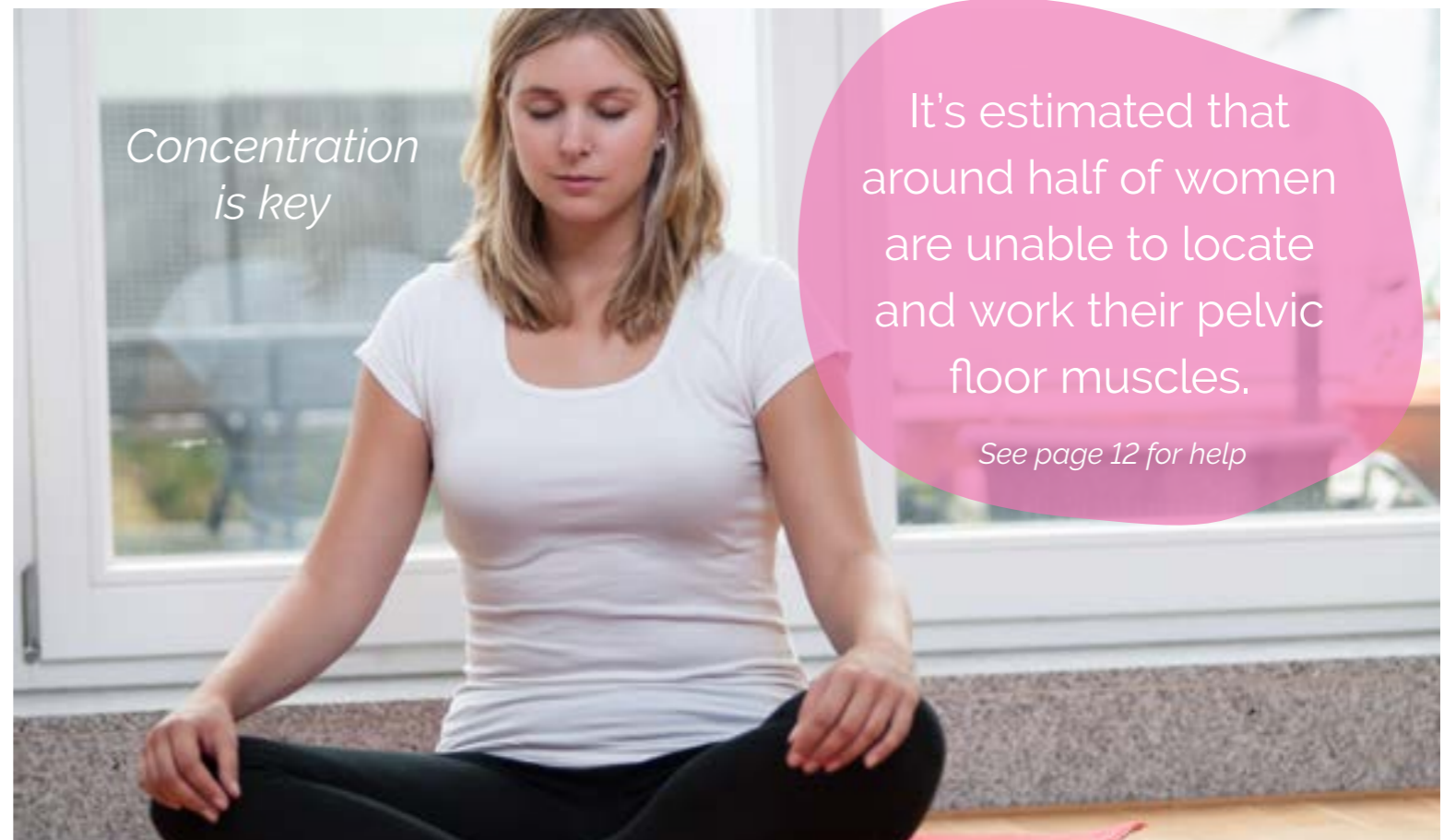
Pilates and yoga are both excellent for the pelvic floor. Not sure where to start? See our pelvic floor exercise playlist on YouTube.



Kegel8®
Pelvic Floor Exercise
Techniques



Kegel8®
Abdominal exercises for
a stronger pelvic floor



How to Relax the Pelvic Area when You Want to be Sexually Intimate

Pelvic floor muscles need to be able to properly relax to be able to fully empty the bladder and bowel and for sex to be comfortable. **Clues that too much pelvic floor tension might be a problem for you are:**

- In everyday life you notice that you sit with your buttocks clenched, perched on the edge of chairs!
- You find using tampons difficult.
- You often feel achy, painful or heavy in the vulva and vaginal area
- Penetration is difficult, feeling painful and/or blocked.
- During sex you feel yourself tensing up down below (or notice that you are gripping your teeth or clenching your body).

Watch Physiotherapist, Amanda Savage, speak to Kegel8 Founder and Managing Director, **Stephanie Taylor**, explaining how to master using your abdominals, breathing and moving while using your pelvic floor.



Kegel8®
Stretches for
pelvic floor
relaxation



Kegel8
Can the Pelvic
Floor Be Too Tight?



Try these ideas:

1. Practise daily stretches which will open out the pelvis:

Yoga-style like bringing one or both knees to your chest, butterfly stretch to open the knees or "happy baby" stretch or see these pelvic stretches that can be done even in the office.



Kegel8®
Pelvic floor
exercises on
the move:
The Squat

2. Take time on your own to explore the outside (vulva) and inside (vagina) with your fingers.

In the bath is nice as you are naked anyway and it is warm, clean and private. Can you feel any areas that want to be stretched or massaged? Are there some focused tension spots? These areas will love to be massaged by yourself or your partner. Take time with yourself to understand your body better - massage, dilators/vibrators, doing pelvic floor exercises for intimate moments:

3. Make sure your bladder and bowel are empty first As this helps prevent pressure and infections.

4. Have a nice environment, be warm, wear clothing you like.

5. Remembering that "sex" is about intimacy not just penetration.

Choosing Sexual Positions to Suit Your Body

Conditions that affect the bladder functions, its nerves, and the involvement of pelvic floor muscles can cause discomfort in some sexual positions.

Pain, spasms, bladder weakness and a pelvic floor that is not very co-ordinated can affect sexual function.

Kegel8® can help you find the best position to maximise pleasure.



For Pleasure

Try the following positions for more comfortable intercourse.

Modified Missionary

A pillow underneath to tilt your pelvis will move pelvic organs back out of the way, supports your spine, helps you relax and helps make your partner feel less heavy



Spooning

There is no weight on your spine, pelvis or rubbing on the vulva skin. You do not need to be too active. You can control the speed and depth of penetration. However, there may be pressure against the base of the bladder which could be irritating.



Kneeling

There is no pressure on your belly but might push into the bladder more.

Standing

Being a little more adventurous about how & where you have sex may increase your libido. The shower is a good option if you worry about leaks.

Straddling

Place several pillows between your partners thighs to help manage the depth of penetrations. You may need to lean far forward to help with penetration. This position keeps your partner's weight away from your hips and pelvis. There is less rubbing on the posterior wall of the vagina.



Use a pelvic floor toner.

Kegel8® Ultra 20

If you are struggling to locate your pelvic floor and exercise it independently, we recommend the Ultra 20 Electronic Pelvic Toner. This uses Neuromuscular Electronic Stimulation (NMES), painless electronic currents to exercise your pelvic floor. You can either use a probe, which is inserted a few centimetres internally and delivers the NMES directly to the pelvic floor muscles, or electrode pads on your skin to stimulate the nerves that are connected to your pelvic floor muscles.

It accurately locates your pelvic floor muscles and exercises them for you. The **"smile"** feature shows you in real time when your pelvic floor muscles are in work and rest mode.

Use the Ultra 20 to get your pelvic floor into shape, and then to maintain good pelvic floor strength and support for your pelvic organs,

Most women notice results with the Ultra 20 after only 4 weeks

★★★★★ Trustpilot

"I noticed the difference much quicker than I expected. I have never worn my ring (pessary) again ever since, despite resuming some other activities like exercising. My symptoms were no longer there."

– verified buyer



Medically Proven

1

Week 1

With 45 minute sessions, your toner will help you find your pelvic floor muscles.

4

Week 4

You'll start to feel a real difference. More control, less leaks, more confidence.

12

Week 12

Your pelvic floor is strong and you have a pleasurable and confident sex life.

Kegel8 bespoke programmes

Bladder leaks can be improved by practising pelvic floor muscle exercises. The Kegel8 Ultra 20 has **20 electrical stimulation programmes** to improve pelvic floor muscle strength, co-ordination and relaxation as well as to directly calm the bladder nerves.

Amanda Savage, pelvic health physiotherapist, has devised a series of step by step 12 week guided pathways (using a carefully chosen mix of these programmes) for 9 common conditions. Our **Let's Get Started Guide** includes pathways for:

1. More effective pelvic floor exercises
2. Bladder weakness and stress incontinence
3. Uncontrollable gas/wind and bowel control
4. Menopause, perimenopause and post menopause
5. Pelvic organ prolapse
6. Pelvic pain
7. Postpartum recovery
8. Vaginal looseness and lack of sensation
9. Rehabilitation after gynaecological surgery

★★★★★ Trustpilot

Much easier and more pleasant to use than I imagined!

- verified buyer

"Wow - this is much less of a pain and faff to use than I thought it might be; it's actually super-easy, it's very quick to find the sections you need in the guide, run the preliminary programmes, and start working on your pelvic floor. I'm only two weeks in, and already finding an improvement to my urge/stress incontinence - I only wish I'd ordered much earlier. It's also not at all an unpleasant sensation - and best of all, apart from the fact it actually works, of course, is that it's also teaching me about how to tighten my own pelvic floor muscles at other times (turns out I've spent all these years not quite getting it right, despite investing in all sorts of other gadgets). Buy one today - you really won't regret it."



You can use a probe or electrodes, whichever suits you better.

[Shop Kegel8 accessories >](#)

How to know if you are squeezing correctly

If you don't need to use electronic stimulation and you can already contract your pelvic floor muscles correctly, the next step is to practise doing your exercises independently, which nurtures the mind-muscle connection further. But you need to do them regularly & effectively.

Biofeedback Trainer

Our Kegel8® Biofeedback trainer can be helpful for you to check that you are doing your exercises correctly, especially if you need to focus on relaxing fully between contractions.

Just like with any bit of gym kit, it is fun to have tasks to do and targets to reach. If you tend to get distracted when exercising, using a device that makes you concentrate can be motivating and help get them done.

How does it work?

The Kegel8 Biofeedback device shows you what you are doing with your muscles when you contract them independently. The soft, air-filled vaginal probe connects to the small handheld monitor. With each Kegel, you squeeze the probe and the monitor displays the strength of your squeeze on a scale of 1 to 6.

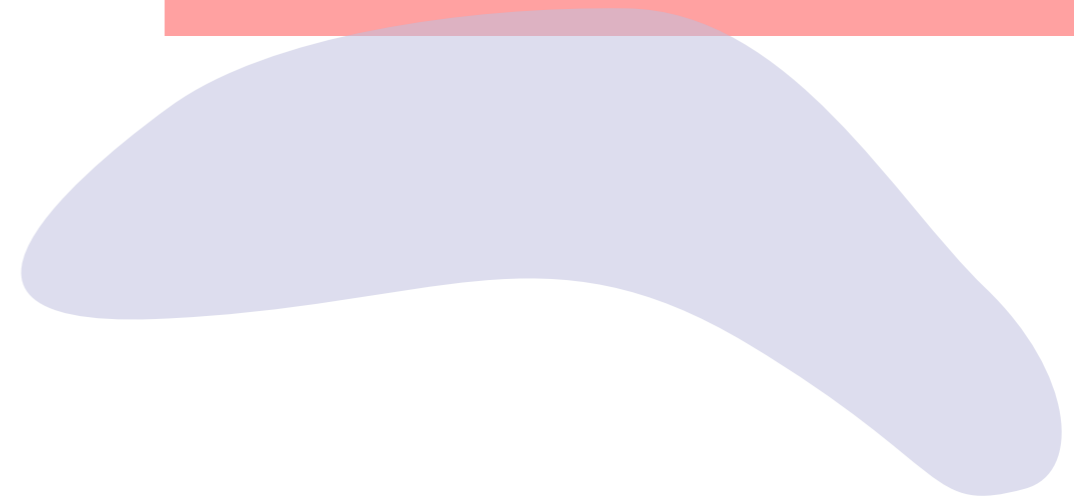


How do I know if my pelvic floor is too tight or too loose?

Pelvic floor muscles can be too tight from over exercising them or because you are a 'gripper'. This is a common issue with athletes.

If these muscles are always tight this can lead to problems with leakage as muscles can fatigue, they can cause pain when passing urine or the bladder may not empty properly.

You can experience pain in the vagina, back passage or even pain when you have sex. It is key to not tighten up as you need to let go and this can be a difficult exercise to do.



We hope you've enjoyed this guide

Further reading at Kegel8.co.uk

We're here to help!

If you have questions or simply need some advice, please get in touch and our advisors will be on hand to help.

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W: www.Kegel8.co.uk

Our opening hours are:

8am-4pm Monday to Friday*

*Closed bank holidays

Thinking about buying?

We want to help you make sure you have the right device for your individual needs and that you can achieve results that last.

Book a call with us below:

Book now>



Kegel8® Savantini House, Foster Street, Kingston upon Hull, UK HU8 8BT

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