



PELVIS-PERINEAL MUSCULATURE STRENGTHENING EXERCISES: ANAL INCONTINENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Anal incontinence refers to the involuntary loss of faeces or gas or the inability to retain the rectal contents for a sufficient time to go to a suitable environment for evacuation. There are no certain data on the prevalence in the general population in Italy, however it is estimated that around 2% of the population is affected with significantly higher percentages among the elderly and those hospitalized in long-term care facilities.

Patients with faecal incontinence present with symptoms ranging from occasional loss of air to complete loss of intestinal contents.

There are two types of incontinence:

- **Urge faecal incontinence**: characterized by the impossibility of postponing evacuation once the stimulus has been felt, often a symptom of dysfunction of the external anal sphincter;
- **Passive faecal incontinence**: characterized by the loss of gas, liquid or solid stools, typically related to a defect of the internal anal sphincter or to insufficient closure of the external anal sphincter due to rectal prolapse or III-IV degree haemorrhoids.

Causes

There are several causes of faecal incontinence and they often originate from a combination of several factors.

The most frequent causes are:

- injuries to the anal sphincters, both traumatic and secondary to surgical operations in the anorectal area, such as operations for tumours, fistulas, anal fissures, haemorrhoids, prolapses and, first of all, obstetric injuries. It is now established that childbirth is the main predisposing factor in women which determines an incidence of incontinence 8 times higher than in men.

- impaired intestinal function, such as in the case of chronic inflammatory bowel disease or malabsorption
- causes of neurological origin such as in cases of stroke, spinal cord injury or diabetic neuropathy.

Among the rare congenital causes we mention imperforate anus, anorectal agenesis, spina bifida and myelomeningocele.

Initial specialist treatment is generally of a rehabilitative nature. The strengthening of the perineal muscle floor can allow an improvement of the compromised containment capacity through adequate exercises and training.

This booklet illustrates exercises for strengthening the pelvis-perineal muscles to be performed daily at home, after training by specialized personnel.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dear patient, you are undergoing perineal rehabilitation and you will carry out the following exercises:

1. contraction and muscle relaxation of the perineal (anal) muscles with the manual help of a therapist (RNM);
2. contraction and muscle relaxation of the perineal (anal) musculature through the introduction of a probe (anal or, if necessary, vaginal for women) connected to a device capable of visually demonstrating the degree of perineal contraction (BFB);

By means of a probe (anal or, if necessary, vaginal for women), muscle electrostimulation will be carried out in order to make the perineal muscles (SEF) contract appropriately, and therefore strengthen.

The manoeuvres described above are not painful in any way and you can interrupt the treatment at any time.

PERINEAL AWARENESS EXERCISE PROGRAM

- The exercises must be performed with an empty bladder.
- Lying on back with legs bent.
- Be careful not to activate your abs, adductors and glutes.
- Contract the perineal muscle "I think I'm holding urine" for 4 seconds, rest for 8 seconds, repeat 10 times.
- Contract the perineal muscle "I think I hold gas or stool" for 4 seconds, rest for 8 seconds, repeat 10 times.

STANDARD PERINEAL STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

1. while lying down, contract the perineum for 4 seconds, rest for 8 seconds, repeat 10 times.
2. while seated, contract the perineum for 4 seconds, rest for 8 seconds, repeat 10 times.
3. in standing position, contract the perineum for 4 seconds, rest for 8 seconds, repeat 10 times.
4. rapid contractions of the perineum 10 repetitions for 2 times to be performed supine, sitting and standing

STATIC AND DYNAMIC COORDINATION EXERCISES

Exercise no. 1



Contract the perineum and rotate the pelvis backwards maintaining the contraction for 4 seconds, return to the starting position and relax the perineum, rest for 8”.

Repeat 10 times

Exercise no. 2



Contract the perineum, lift the head and maintain the contraction for 4 seconds, return the head to the pillow, relax the perineum, and rest in the starting position for 8 seconds.

Repeat 10 times

Exercise no. 3



Contract the perineum, lift the pelvis off the bed, maintain the contraction for 4 seconds, return the pelvis to the bed and relax the perineum, rest in the starting position for 8 seconds.

Repeat 10 times

Exercise no. 4



Contract the perineum, bring the knees together, hold the contraction for 4 seconds, open the knees, relax the perineum and rest for 8 seconds.

Repeat 10 times

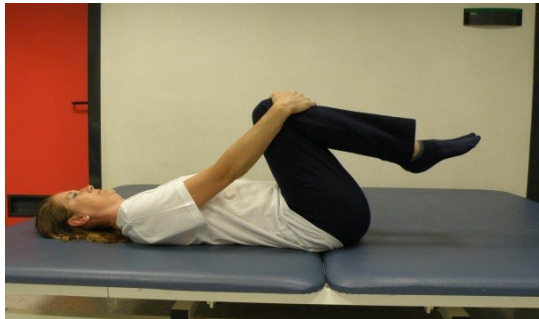
Exercise no. 5



Keep one knee to the chest with elbows straight and perform contractions of the perineum for 4 seconds combined with rests of 8 seconds.

Repeat 5 times with the right knee and 5 with the left knee

Exercise no. 6



Keep both knees to the chest with straight arms (or with feet resting on a riser) and perform perineum contractions for 4 seconds combined with rests of 8 seconds.

Exercise no. 7



Rapid contractions of the perineum.
Repeat 10 times per 2 volte

Exercise no. 8



Starting from the seated position, tighten the perineum and slightly rotate the pelvis backwards maintaining the contraction for 4 seconds, return to the neutral position with the pelvis and rest in the starting position for 8 seconds.
Repeat 10 times

Exercise no. 9



Standing with your back against the wall, squeeze the perineum and rotate the pelvis backwards maintaining the contraction for 4 seconds, return to the starting position and rest 8 seconds.

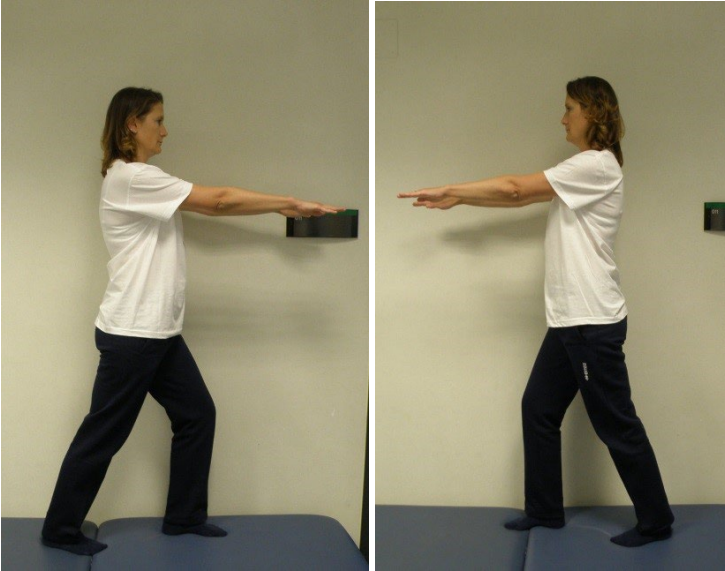
Repeat 10 times

Exercise no. 10



Resting with your hands on the wall, contract the perineum while bringing one leg out, maintain the position for 4 seconds, return to the starting position, relax the perineum and rest for 8 seconds. Repeat 5 times on each side or 10 alternating movements

Exercise no. 11



Resting with your hands on the wall, in a "lunge" position (knee of the forward leg slightly bent), perform 5 contractions of the perineum of 4 seconds combined with rests of 8 seconds. Repeat 5 times on each side (5 on the right and 5 on the left)

Exercise no. 12



In a semi-crouched position, with the back resting against the wall, perform contractions of the perineum for 4 seconds, followed by rests of 8 seconds.

Repeat 10 times

PRACTICAL TIPS

Automate the contraction of the perineum during activities of daily life (household tasks, at work, lifting weights).

Contract the perineum:

- passing from sitting position to standing position;
- coughing (3 coughs per day: 1 lying down, 1 sitting down and 1 standing);
- blowing your nose;
- walking fast.

NB: the exercises can be modified according to the conditions and motor skills of the patient

NB: start with contractions of 4 seconds and possibly increase the duration gradually over time. The pause between one contraction and another must last twice as long as the contraction.

AND ALSO IF...

Are you having difficulty understanding if you are contracting the perineum correctly?

If you feel your glutes activating:

- lying on your back or sitting (on the ground) bring your knees to your chest
- sit on your heels with your stomach in contact with your thighs and your forehead resting on the bed

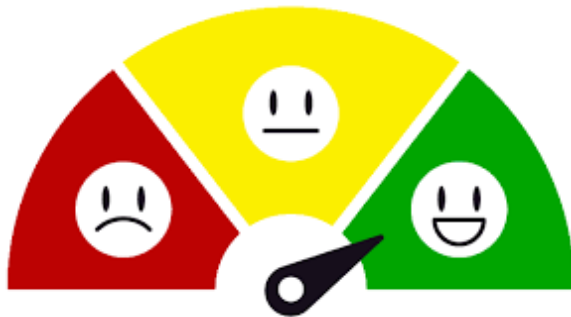
- squat (sitting on heels)

If you feel your inner thighs or legs activating:

- lying on your back or sitting (on the floor) bring your knees to your chest and spread your legs

If you feel your abdomen activating:

- Be careful not to hold your breath
- Put your hands on your belly
- Try putting a pillow behind your shoulders in order to get up a little and thus obtain a semi-sitting position



NOTICE

This booklet is accurate at the time of printing and is updated periodically. Between one edition and another, however, there could be changes in the operation.



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