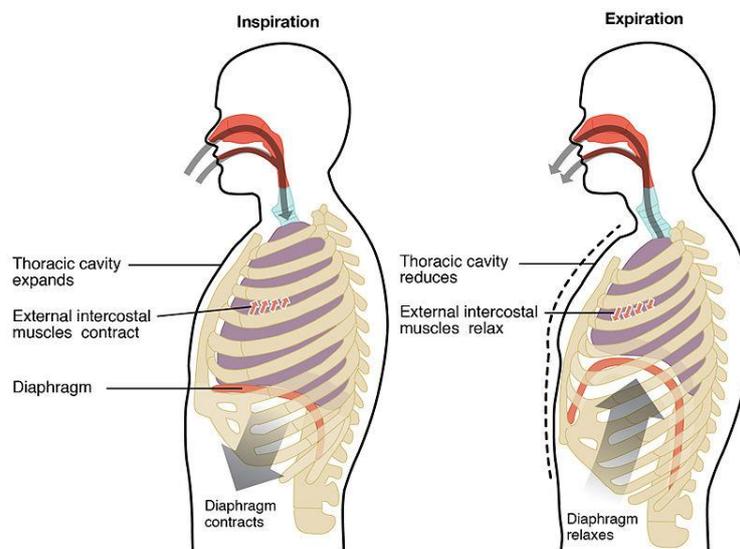


# Pelvic Floor Exercises – The Basics

## Quick Pointers:

1. More is not always better, quality is more important than quantity.
2. Pelvic floors aren't always weak if you're having bladder problems. Tight, short pelvic floor muscles can be just as problematic as weak ones.
3. Mindfulness is important. Tuning into what you're doing when you're practicing your pelvic floor exercises can help improve co-ordination, strength and balance much more quickly.
4. Lying is easiest, sitting is harder, standing is hardest. Start lying down and progress.
5. Skipping days isn't the end of the world! Just get practicing again tomorrow.
6. If you're not sure, ask. Most hospitals have a specialist women's health physio who can see you to ensure you're doing your exercises correctly.



## The Steps (Easy as ABC!):

### 1. Awareness

Lie on your back to start. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your tummy. Take a long, slow breath in. Note how much your chest rises compared to your tummy. Now bring your attention to your pelvic floor area. Note how it feels when you inhale and exhale. Don't worry at this stage if you're not feeling a lot, this will improve with practice!

## 2. Breathing

To encourage your diaphragm to move and stretch, your tummy should move quite a bit more than your chest. If your chest is moving as much or more than your tummy, try relaxing your tummy muscles, legs and buttocks and try again. You can also try taking a smaller, quieter and longer breath in.

Once this has become easy for you, start to bring your awareness to your pelvic floor as you breathe in and out. Notice the very subtle movement there as you inhale and exhale. Your pelvic floor will relax downwards as you inhale and recoils upwards as you exhale.

## 3. Co-Ordination

Time to add your pelvic floor squeeze! Once you have mastered abdominal breathing and the pelvic floor release you can begin to try some gentle pelvic floor squeezes.

Step 1 – Breathe in slowly and as long as you can allowing your pelvic floor to relax with the ‘in’ breath.

Step 2 – Begin to breathe out. No hurry with adding your pelvic floor squeeze.

Step 3 – Add a **very gentle** squeeze as you continue breathing out and hold until you have exhaled fully.

Step 4 – Release your squeeze.

**Note:** If you find you can’t release your squeeze, your muscles may not have the endurance to hold it for the whole ‘out’ breath. Let go your squeeze a little sooner if this is the case. In the beginning the length of your squeeze doesn’t matter, co-ordinating it correctly is more important.