

## KEGEL EXERCISES

### What they accomplish

The Kegel (pronounced Kāy-gill) exercises were originally developed by Arnold Kegel, M. D., to deal with the problem of urinary stress-incontinence in his women patients. Quite unexpectedly, he discovered that his orgasmic patients developed a greater capacity for experiencing orgasms, and his nonorgasmic patients began experiencing orgasm.

The primary muscle involved is the pubococcygeus (P-C) muscle which when exercised strengthens not only urinary sphincter control, but increases muscle tonus in the vagina thus increasing ability to constrict the vagina voluntarily. Consequently female vaginal perception and response during penile-vaginal intercourse are increased. The exercises also contribute to elimination of pain during intercourse.

For women who desire to become more responsive to genital stimulation, the use and training of the P-C and associated muscles is one of the most effective individual techniques in producing the desired therapeutic results.

### How to do them

To first identify the P-C muscle:

Sit on the toilet. Spread your legs as far apart as possible, and start and stop the flow of urine. The P-C muscle is the only one that can accomplish this while in this position.

Once one learns where the muscles are, the Kegels can be done during daily activities which do not involve a great deal of moving around, e.g., driving an automobile, sitting, doing dishes, watching television, or lying in bed.

#### Exercise I:

Contract the P-C muscle, hold for 3 seconds, relax, and repeat the process. These may be done as often during the day as desired, but approximately 90 contractions (6 fifteen minute periods a day) are recommended. Because the P-C is a muscle like any other muscle, with too strenuous exercise it can become sore. If this happens, either stop doing the Kegels for one or two days until the temporary soreness disappears and resume, or reduce substantially the number done per day and gradually increase to the recommended number.

#### Exercise II:

Contract and release the P-C muscle very rapidly, 25 to 50 times a day (10 contractions at a time), depending on the condition of the muscle. Although the contractions during orgasm are much more rapid, this exercise approximates what the P-C does involuntarily during orgasm.