

INFORMATION SHEET 1: USING A PERINEOMETER

Devices such as the PFX2 and the Pelvexiser are called perineometers. Perineometers measure movement in the pelvic floor muscles and show the strength and duration of that movement. Physiotherapists use more sophisticated perineometers for diagnosis and treatment, but the perineometers we sell can be used by women at home.

Pelvic floor (or kegel) exercises involve squeezing and lifting the pelvic floor muscles. When you do this correctly, a perineometer will register movement. However it is also possible to create some movement in a perineometer's reading by pushing, which can be harmful to your pelvic floor.

Before you begin an exercise program with a perineometer, and from time to time when you use it, check to make sure you are doing the squeeze and lift exercise correctly and that your perineometer is actually measuring your squeeze, rather than your pushing pressure:

- Lay down on your back. You will either need to rest your fingers very lightly on the sensor outside of the vagina or position a mirror so you can see what is happening.
- Place the sensor in your vagina and do a pelvic floor muscle squeeze.
- If you are using your muscles correctly, the part of the sensor outside your vagina will move downwards (towards your bottom if you are lying down) or it may pull further inwards as the muscles contract.
- If the part of the sensor outside your vagina moves upwards (towards your tummy if you are lying down) or appears to move further outwards, this means you are pushing, rather than squeezing. Pushing will not help your pelvic floor muscles and will probably weaken them further.

Practice the correct movement while using the perineometer. Even if you are only able to squeeze and contract a little, using the perineometer in accordance with its instructions, and checking your technique regularly, will lead to a definite improvement for almost all women.

If you find you are completely unable to squeeze and contract your pelvic floor muscles at all, we suggest you:

- Consult a women's health physiotherapist or continence advisor. Phone the National Continence Helpline on 1300 33 00 66 for more information or search the Australian Physiotherapy Association's database at <http://physiotherapy.asn.au/index.php/physiotherapy-a-you/find-a-physio/using-find-a-physio> to find a Continence and Women's Health physiotherapist in your area.
- Read Dr Pauline Chiarelli's Women's Waterworks (available from us at \$9.95) for more information, tips and techniques
- Consider vaginal cones, such as the Aquaflex Pelvic Floor Exercise System, or electrical stimulation using a Pericalm Continence Stimulation Unit. Vaginal cones (or weights) and electrical stimulation devices can both stimulate and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles without the need to do the squeeze and lift exercises. Both are available from us, either online or by mail/phone order.

Before using any product in our range, we advise that you clean all parts that are inserted into the body carefully in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

Assembling your perineometer

The PFX2 is supplied with parts ready to connect for immediate use.

Depending on the model in stock at any particular time, the PX-IQ may require you the silicone tube to be attached to the gauge device. This is much easier with the careful application of dry warmth to the tubing, such as with a hair dryer. The softened tubing is much more easily attached to the metal spur of the biofeedback gauge using a turning motion.

Likewise, changing the PX-IQ sensor can be made easier by the careful application of dry warmth, such as with a hair dryer. The softened sensors are also usually more easily assembled and disassembled using a turning motion.

The material presented in this information sheet is intended as an information source only. The information is provided solely on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessment of the matters presented herein and are advised to verify all relevant representations, statements and information. The information should not be considered complete and should not be used in place of the advice of a health care provider. Pelvic Floor Exercise does not accept liability to any person for the information or advice provided in this sheet, or for loss or damages incurred as a result of reliance upon the material contained herein.