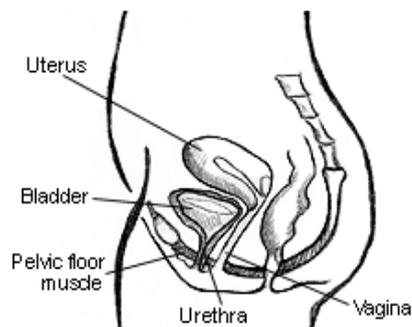




INFORMATION SHEET : AQUAFLEX PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISE SYSTEM

Positioning Vaginal Cones

- Start with the largest cone, empty.
- The correct distance can vary between women, but it should be pushed in a similar distance to how you would normally use a tampon. Be sure that you leave the string outside the vagina, as you will need it to remove the cone (just like you would remove a tampon)
- To act as a weight that stimulates the pelvic floor muscle to contract, the lowest point of the cone must be inserted far enough that it sits **above** the pelvic floor muscles- about where the line pointing to the vagina ends in the picture below.



Vaginal Cones in use

- Like any new product, the cone may feel slightly uncomfortable at first, but this is usually only because it is a new sensation for your body and you tend to be extremely "aware" of it. This sensation also provides feedback to you about your pelvic floor muscles. You can also try squeezing the cone to hold it in your vagina – this is a pelvic floor contraction. If you squeeze and it slides out then you are performing the wrong action. You should feel as if you are trying to "lift" the cone inside, not push it out. It can help to gently breathe OUT as you tighten and lift.
- Depending on the strength of your pelvic floor muscles, you may find that the cone tends to slip out when you first use it. If this happens, be patient and persist with the program. As the muscles become stronger, they should naturally hold the cone in place, even under physical exertion and whilst coughing and sneezing. You may find initially that you can only hold it in place for a few minutes. This is fine - you will increase the strength and endurance of your muscles as you use your cones regularly
- Vaginal cones act as a "weight" in the vagina and therefore can strengthen the muscles through the automatic contraction that occurs to hold them in place.
- Vaginal cones can also be used to provide resistance for the pelvic floor muscles in a pelvic floor muscle strengthening program as well as for building endurance in the pelvic floor muscles.
- Modern research principles and clinical experience indicate that you will get a much better response if you use the weighted cones both ways:

Two ways of using your vaginal balls to train your pelvic floor:

1. Whilst the manufacturers state that you can use balls "without the need for doing squeeze and lift exercises", they actually work more effectively if you also do some pelvic floor exercises (squeeze and lift) whilst wearing them. Having the balls in the vagina also gives you feedback and something to feel as you squeeze and lift.
 - ✓ This can be done progressively by standing still and firstly relaxing your pelvic floor as far as you can without the cones slipping out. Next, try to gently lift the cone inside your vagina hold for a count of 3-5 seconds (or whilst you take a slow breath in and out) and slowly lower down again.
 - ✓ Rest for 5 -10 seconds and then repeat up to 10 times
 - ✓ Once you can do this, gradually increase the time of holding , working up to 10 seconds or 3-4 breaths.
 - ✓ Always rest in between to allow the muscles to recover from these stronger squeezes.
2. Wearing the balls and walking around for up to 20 minutes is enough to help develop endurance. However, just like other muscles, the pelvic floor will fatigue and tire if you try to work them continuously without a break. Don't leave the balls in for long periods –build up to 15-20 minutes maximum gradually as you are able. Trying to hold them in too long can in some cases, cause over activity in the pelvic floor which may lead to pain.
 - Also try progressing to holding the cone in whilst lifting the washing basket , making the bed etc which will help you develop the habit of tightening the pelvic floor when you do actions that put stress or pressure downwards on your pelvic floor which is what leads to episodes of leaking (known as Stress Urinary Incontinence or SUI) or pressure on prolapsing pelvic organs.



Progression

- Once you can retain the large cone when empty, or if this is too easy to start with, start to add weights inside the cone. You can progress from the 5 g up to a combination of 55g by unscrewing the top, inserting the desired weight, and then screwing the top back on.
- When you can easily hold a weight in for 20 minutes, it is time to progress to the next weight.
- If you don't find the 55g total weight challenging enough, you can buy our exclusive Add-On weights which progress you up to 95g (available online at www.pelvicfloorexercise.com.au)

Troubleshooting

The Cone won't stay in

- check that you are inserting it correctly and that you are not using too much lubricant (which will make it very slippery)
- Try using it lying on your back with knees bent. In this position you are eliminating gravity. Gently squeeze and "lift" the cone. Hold for 3-5 seconds, relax, rest for 5 seconds and then repeat up to 10 times.
- Progress to gently pulling on the removal string as if trying to pull it out but use your pelvic floor muscles to hold it in.
- Once you are feeling more confident, progress to standing again and see if you can retain the cone in the upright position.

It is not as beneficial to use vaginal cones (or any vaginal weights) whilst sitting, as muscle strengthening develops from automatic contraction of the muscles as they try to hold the cone in place against the effect of gravity whilst you are standing and moving around. This is how your pelvic floor should work - gently contracting to support your pelvic organs when you are upright.

If you are unsure about how to use vaginal cones, it causes pain or worsening of your symptoms, or if you experience no improvement after using them for 12 weeks, you should consult your health practitioner or a women's health physiotherapist.

Removal and care

- Remove cone by slowly pulling on the string, just like taking out a tampon.
- Clean with soap and water, dry and store in the container supplied.

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