

YOU CAN TRAIN YOUR VAGINA TO BE MORE ORGASMIC! WE PUT THREE SEX TOOLS TO THE TEST

YOUR BEST orgasm ever!

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

When it's in top shape, the pubococcygeus (PC) muscle, aka the "love" muscle, helps you have strong and lasting orgasms. But with age, pregnancy, and even lack of sex, this pelvic muscle can weaken. Women have long used Kegel exercises (repeated contracting and releasing, as if to stop the flow of urine) to help, but the truth is, they're not enough. "Many women who do self-guided Kegels don't improve, because they don't do them right," says Howard I. Glazer, Ph.D., a NYC-based psychologist who specializes in pelvic-floor muscle diagnosis and rehabilitation. "Dr. Arnold Kegel originally designed his exercises for use with a resistance device, to ensure their effectiveness." Here, women try out PC-toning tools. To see if their muscles got stronger, we measured them before and after with biofeedback—but the *real* proof is in the testers' orgasms.



"SEX IS DEFINITELY BETTER."

—Faith, 34, graphic designer



GADGET The Kegelmaster 2000, \$79.95 plus shipping and handling at www.kegelmaster2000.com.

WHAT IT IS A salad tong-like tool that tones your PC muscle using resistance.

HOW IT WORKS You insert the open end into your vagina. Then, you practice squeezing and releasing the device by tightening your vaginal wall around it.

WHAT WE FOUND "When I opened the box, I laughed out loud. It's really funny-looking. But it was easy to use. I started with the lowest of four tension settings and worked up to level two by the end of four weeks."

BETTER ORGASMS? "Yes. Sex is definitely better for both me and my partner after using it. He says I feel tighter—and I can feel how strongly

I contract, especially during orgasm."

BIOFEEDBACK "Faith's muscles were healthy and well-balanced to begin with, and she added even more stamina by doing these exercises, which accounts for her positive results," says Dr. Glazer.

THE MUSCLE TONE-BETTER SEX CONNECTION

Just like your biceps or hamstrings, your PC muscle is made of slow- and fast-twitch fibers. Together, they account for sheer power and allow your vagina to "grab." On their own, fast-twitch fibers also produce and sustain the feeling of orgasm. Typical, five-minute-or-less Kegel "workouts" aren't enough to build their endurance, says Dr. Glazer, whose patients use biofeedback tools to check their form. "I prescribe a 10-second hold, followed by a 10-second rest, repeated 60 times over 20 minutes. It should be done at least twice a day for six to eight weeks, with ongoing, biweekly maintenance thereafter. It makes a difference." >

"SEX DOESN'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT."

—Karen, 29, writer

GADGET FemTone Vaginal Weights, \$124.78 plus shipping and handling at www.shopinprivate.com.

WHAT IT IS Five tampon-like weights, ranging from 20 grams (just under an ounce) to 70 grams (about two-and-a-half ounces). Each one is about as long as your pinkie and as thick as your thumb.

HOW IT WORKS You insert a single weight into your vagina and hold it there by pulling upward with your PC muscle. Once you can hold a weight in place for 15 minutes twice a day, you advance to the next weight. You should eventually be able to run up stairs and jog with the largest weight in place. You remove it like a tampon.

WHAT WE FOUND "It was incredibly hard. At first, I'd insert the lightest weight and squeeze as hard as I could, but the weight would drop right out. For the first few days, I could barely do 10 seconds at a time. That was frustrating, but I kept at it. Even so, after four weeks, I still couldn't go the distance with the lightest one, much less advance to the second size."

BETTER ORGASMS? "For all that work, sex feels no different."

BIOFEEDBACK "Karen's PC muscle did become stronger, but because she wasn't able to hold the weights in place for long durations—a typical problem with most vaginal weights—she had no improvement in muscle stamina, and that's essential for powerful orgasms," says Dr. Glazer.



"MY ORGASMS ARE MORE INTENSE NOW."

—Jeannie, 39, administrative assistant

GADGET The U-Control home trainer, \$350 plus time with a biofeedback expert (ask your gynecologist for a referral), who will know local distributors that sell or rent the device.

WHAT IT IS A battery-operated, instant-feedback device for use during Kegels.

HOW IT WORKS You insert the probe into your vagina and keep it there while you flex and relax your PC muscle. The U-Control measures the electrical activity of your pelvic-floor muscles every time you contract, and it displays a lighted signal to show you how you did.

WHAT WE FOUND "This was tough! I used it during Kegels, which I did twice a day for 20 minutes, just like Dr. Glazer

recommended. The lights and sounds of the device told me when to contract and release; I could 'view' each contraction by watching how far the line of light went up, kind of like the ring-the-bell game at a carnival. In the beginning, my whole pelvic area ached from the effort—including my groin and abdominal muscles."

BETTER ORGASMS? "Yes! My orgasms are more intense now, and I just feel stronger. Even my husband feels a difference during sex. I had done Kegels in the past, but I did them on my own, and I know now that I hadn't been using proper form."

BIOFEEDBACK "Jeannie improved in both strength and stamina, so her results make complete sense," says Dr. Glazer.



Could your vagina be too tight?

When your PC muscle is too tight, the result can be painful sex—and, because chronic tension can weaken your urethral sphincter, a constant feeling that you have to empty your bladder. When acute, it's impossible to insert a tampon without pain, much less a penis. Luckily, there's help.

"EVEN WHEN I'M AROUSED, I HAVE PAIN WITH SEX."

—Nikki, 31, research analyst

"I was getting up to pee two or three times a night. And even when I was aroused, I had little to no natural lubrication, so intercourse left me sore."

EXPERT ANALYSIS "Nikki's PC muscle fibers are in a constant state of contraction, which impairs blood flow to her genitals, and optimal blood flow is crucial for arousal mechanisms, like lubrication," says Dr. Glazer. "Her frequent bathroom trips are connected, because constant tension has weakened the fibers that control urine flow."

THE FIX Like Jeannie, Nikki used a U-Control tool and watched it react as she tightened, then relaxed, her PC muscle. During her exercises, she honed in on the relaxed sensation, and in doing so, she trained her muscle to be less tight.

NIKKI'S RESULTS "It helped! I'm not running to the bathroom as often, and sex is much better; there's more lubrication, and the soreness is gone." □