

Aquaflex®

Instruction Manual – GB

Mode d'emploi – FR

Gebrauchsanweisung – DE

Handleiding – NL

Bruksanvisning – SW

Käyttöohje – FIN

Brukerveiledning – NOR

Brugsvejledning – DAN



inner strength, outer confidence

This booklet is full of essential information about AQUAFLEX® weighted cones and how to use them to achieve and maintain the best results.

3	Introduction
4-5	All about your pelvic floor muscles
6	Your AQUAFLEX® kit
7	Getting started
8	Choosing your start weight
9	How to add weights
10	Achieving the best results
11	Advanced exercise and urge incontinence
12-14	Commonly asked questions
15	Check list of do's and don'ts

AQUAFLEX® is a clinically proven Pelvic Floor Exercise System, consisting of weighted vaginal cones. AQUAFLEX® has been specially designed to help women who accidentally leak urine when they laugh, cough, sneeze or exercise. This condition is known medically as stress incontinence, but other terms include having a 'weak pelvic floor' or having 'poor bladder control'. Whatever you prefer to call it, AQUAFLEX® can help cure it – starting now!

Take Control with AQUAFLEX®

Congratulations on purchasing AQUAFLEX® – you'll soon be well on your way to correcting your stress incontinence.

What is stress incontinence and what causes it?

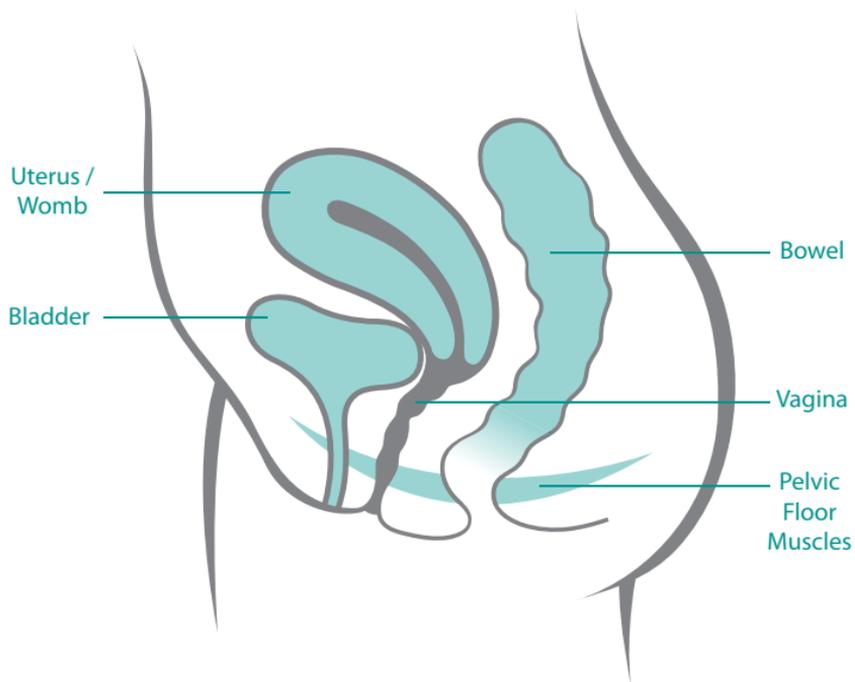
It's a common condition experienced by one in three women. It's brought about by an overall weakness in the pelvic floor. The most obvious cause is pregnancy and childbirth but there are other factors to be taken into account.

The menopause and the general ageing process can also play a part in weakening muscles, and there can also be an inherited family tendency towards a weak pelvic floor. That's why specialists recommend that all women should regularly exercise their pelvic floor muscles.

By investing in AQUAFLEX®, you've taken the first step towards taking care of your pelvic floor muscles - within just 12 weeks you'll be able to feel the difference. Used carefully and regularly, your AQUAFLEX® exercise programme will make a world of difference to you.

Your pelvic floor muscles are attached to the pubic bone. Picture the pelvic floor as a sort of hammock, supporting your bladder, uterus and bowel.

Just imagine, for example, the strain of carrying a baby for nine months and the rigours of giving birth, and you can understand why one in three mums will be left with a weakened pelvic floor and poor control over their bladder.



Use AQUAFLEX® , to prevent or help cure stress incontinence

If you've not yet been affected, you could use AQUAFLEX®, as a preventative measure, to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles in preparation for pregnancy, or as part of an overall fitness programme.

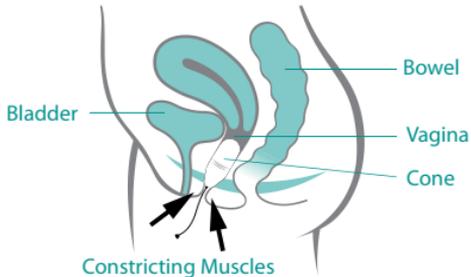
All the effort you put in now will be rewarded later, when you're pregnant or in later life, reducing the likelihood of experiencing stress incontinence.

If you've already noticed that you leak urine when you laugh, cough, sneeze, run, dance or exercise, start using AQUAFLEX®, today and within 12 weeks this problem should be a thing of the past! Your muscle tone will be restored and you'll enjoy the results – greater bladder control and more self-confidence.

- After washing in soapy water, rinsing and drying all the component parts of AQUAFLEX®, (and washing your hands) take the starter cone (that's the larger of the two), without adding any weights.
- Hold the cone where it joins the cord, and push gently into your vagina with only the cord remaining on the outside. It may be more comfortable if you insert the cone whilst standing with one leg raised and supported on a chair or toilet lid. When the cone is fully enclosed within the vagina you should be able to easily touch the bottom of the cone with your finger. For best results, the cone should be positioned lower than a tampon would normally be positioned.

Getting Started with AQUAFLEX®. Remember, practice makes perfect!

- Keep your fingers on the point where the cord joins the cone, and tighten your pelvic floor muscles.
- If you are using the correct muscles, the cone should **pull away** from your finger as it is drawn up into the vagina. If the cone **pushes onto** your finger, you are probably using your stomach muscles instead of your pelvic floor muscles. It may take some practice before you can locate and work these muscles effectively. Be careful not to push the cone too far into your vagina, as this will make your exercise less effective.
- Take all the time you need to repeat this until you're satisfied that you've located the correct muscles. It's really important that you get this first stage right, as it will make a difference to the results you achieve with AQUAFLEX®.
- If you are having difficulty identifying the correct muscles, next time you go to the toilet to urinate, try stopping and starting the flow. You will feel your pelvic floor muscles contract, so next time you use AQUAFLEX®, you'll be familiar with the correct sensation.



PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A ONE-OFF TEST ONLY. IT IS NOT ADVISABLE TO REGULARLY RESTRICT THE FLOW OF URINE.

How to choose the best starting weight and cone size



AQUAFLEX® Cones



AQUAFLEX® Weights

Adding the weights is as easy as 1-2-3

1. Unscrew the cone in the middle.
2. Add the weight to the spindle.
3. Securely screw it back together and it's ready for use.

The AQUAFLEX® weight-training programme – for internal health and well-being

- Insert the starter cone (the larger of the two cones), without adding any weights. Stand up, and use your pelvic floor muscles to try to hold the empty cone in your vagina. If you can retain the cone with no effort, you can now start adding weights. If you can't do this, lie down with knees bent and feet flat on the surface you're lying on. Then tighten your pelvic floor muscles whilst gently pulling on the cord as if trying to pull the cone out.

Tighten the muscles ten times, then stand up again and try to hold the cone in place. If it still doesn't stay in place, repeat the exercise the following morning. If you are still unable to do this, ring our FREEPHONE Helpline (U.K. only) for advice, or consult your doctor, who should be able to put you in touch with a specialist women's health physiotherapist who will be able to help you.

- If it requires some effort to retain the empty cone shell, this is the starting point for using your AQUAFLEX® Pelvic Floor Exercise System. You can start adding weights as you feel your muscles getting stronger.
- If the empty cone stays in place while in the standing position, gently pull the cone out by the cord and start adding weights until you find it an effort to keep the cone in place. Then you will have found the ideal weight to use for starting your exercises.

Exercise every day to achieve the best results

Once you've established your starting weight, you should aim to increase the time you are able to keep the cone in place. Try for up to 20 minutes a day.

When the cone is in place it will cause your pelvic floor muscles to contract automatically around the cone. It is this reflex action that is exercising and strengthening your pelvic floor muscles. So when you're using the cones, you don't have to do the 'squeeze and lift' action you did when exercising the pelvic floor without the use of cones. When you can easily keep the cone in place, start to increase the weights in the cone.

When you can retain the large cone with all the weights in place, it's time to progress to the smaller cone. Once again, start with an empty cone and gradually add increasingly heavier weights.

To achieve the best results in the shortest time, it's a good idea to use AQUAFLEX® every day for the first eight to twelve weeks. If you can't exercise daily, obviously it will take longer for you to reach your goal.

Many women find that they can't manage to hold all the weights. If this happens to you, there's no need for concern. As with any form of exercise, it's important that you make slow and sure progress within limits that are suitable for you personally.

Moving on to more advanced exercise

Once you can keep the weighted cone in place whilst standing still, it's time to make your exercise more challenging. Try to hold the cone in place as you walk around the house, climb the stairs, gently run on the spot or cough. These activities put more pressure on the pelvic floor, making it work harder to support the bladder etc.

At first, each of these exercises may require you to use lighter weights than you are used to – you'll soon progress to your optimum weights, as your muscles grow even stronger.

Exercise for women experiencing urge incontinence

Urge incontinence is the term used when you suddenly feel the need to urinate but can't always make it to the toilet in time. If this happens to you, you could exercise with your cone whilst washing up, washing your hands, or doing anything else that usually makes you leak urine. You should, however, always seek medical advice if you have this problem, as you will require further help and support in overcoming the problem of urge incontinence.

Remember, if you are having difficulties using AQUAFLEX®, you're always welcome to contact our confidential FREEPHONE Helpline on 0808 100 2890 (U.K. only). The line is manned by specially trained female staff who will be pleased to help.

Some commonly asked questions about AQUAFLEX®

- Q** What should I do if I can't hold in an empty cone shell when I'm lying down and pulling gently on the cord?
- A** *If this happens to you, you may need some help from a specialist women's health physiotherapist. Your doctor will be able to recommend one in your area.*
- Q** Do I have to be standing up when using the cones?
- A** *Yes, in the upright position, gravity will cause the cone to move downwards. To prevent the cone from falling out, the muscles tighten up around it and keep it in place. This automatic reaction would not occur without gravity, so sitting down would be ineffective.*
- Q** How can I tell if I've got my cone in the right place?
- A** *All women are shaped differently, so the precise position will vary from person to person. As a general guide, however, the base of the cone (where the cord joins the shell) should be two centimetres inside you – about the same distance as from the tip of your finger to the first joint. Make sure you don't position the cone as high as you would a tampon. You may find the cone slips down slightly, but always ensure the cone shell remains fully enclosed within the vagina.*

Q Can I do the pelvic floor exercises shown at my post-natal class whilst using AQUAFLEX®?

A *You can carry out the sort of 'squeeze and lift' exercises you will have been taught, but as with all exercise, you must take care not to over-exercise the muscles. Take it slowly and carefully for the best results without strain.*

Q How soon after having a baby can I start using AQUAFLEX®?

A *Listen to your body, and start as soon as you feel comfortable. It's best to wait until any stitches or grazes have healed, which will probably take up to 8 weeks. Alternatively, wait until you've been given the all clear at your post-natal check-up.*

Q What is the best time of day to use AQUAFLEX®?

A *AQUAFLEX® can be used at any time to fit in with your schedule. It's worth bearing in mind though, that as the day wears on, your muscles will become tired. So, if you exercise in the evening, you may not be able to use as many weights or to exercise for as long as usual.*

Q For how long should I continue to use AQUAFLEX®?

A *With regular daily use, you should notice some improvement within eight weeks. To maximise the benefits of AQUAFLEX®, it's important that you continue to exercise every day for up to twelve weeks.*

Q What should I do if I'm exercising regularly but don't feel any improvement?

A ***First check the instructions again, and make sure you're using AQUAFLEX® in the correct way. If you are, and you're not getting the results you'd hoped for, you can either ring the AQUAFLEX® FREEPHONE Helpline (U.K. only), or ask your doctor to put you in touch with a specialist women's physiotherapist for one-to-one advice.***

Q Once my pelvic floor muscles are stronger, is there a maintenance routine I should follow?

A ***To make sure you maintain and improve your muscle tone it's a good idea to continue to use AQUAFLEX® just once or twice a week. Or, if you prefer, after every period, you could check whether you are still able to hold the cone in place at the heaviest weight you could previously manage. If you can't, it's time to exercise again, to get your muscles back to their full strength.***

Q Can I use AQUAFLEX® if I experience vaginal dryness?

A ***Yes. You may find the AQUAFLEX® cone easier to insert if it is wet with water or if a very small amount of lubricant is applied.***

Q Am I likely to get Thrush or any other infection from AQUAFLEX®?

A ***Not if you follow a simple hygiene routine. Always make sure you wash your hands thoroughly before using AQUAFLEX®. Make sure every individual part of your AQUAFLEX® kit is washed in soapy water, rinsed, and thoroughly dried each and every time you use it. Pay special attention to the area where the cord enters the cone, and keep the cones in their clean container.***

Your checklist of Do's and Don'ts

DO wash your hands before using AQUAFLEX®, and thoroughly clean the cones and weights every time you use them.

DO seek professional advice if you have any difficulties using AQUAFLEX®. Remember, you can call our FREEPHONE Helpline on 0808 100 2890 (U.K. only). The line is open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Or visit our website www.aquaflexcones.com

DO use your AQUAFLEX® regularly. As with all exercise, the best results are achieved and maintained by constant training.

DON'T be surprised if you have to reduce the weight of your cone when exercising in the evening. Your muscles will tire as the day progresses.

DON'T expect to feel an immediate improvement. Muscle training takes time and the benefits may not be felt for several weeks. If you feel there's no improvement after 12 weeks, you should seek professional advice.

DON'T lend your AQUAFLEX® set to anyone else, for reasons of hygiene.

DON'T use the cones under the following circumstances:

- during or just after intercourse
- whilst using a vaginal diaphragm or cap
- during pregnancy
- if you have a prolapse
- when you have a period
- if you have a vaginal infection



For more information on this and other products in the NEEN range please visit:

www.neenpelvichealth.com

NEEN is a part of the Mobilis Healthcare Group

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