

Fecal Incontinence

Fecal incontinence (FI) is reported by 8–10% of the general population. Anal sphincter weakness or injury is an important contributor to FI.

Sphincter Strengthening Tips for Patients with Fecal Incontinence: Finding your anal sphincter

- Bring knees to chest to stretch the pelvic floor. Now try tightening your anus like you don't want to pass gas or are trying to prevent loose stool from leaking.
- You will feel the anus close and lift upward as you contract. If unsuccessful check to see if you are holding your breath which will actually cause the anus to open due to increased abdominal pressure.
- When contracting the anus, it is ok if the lower abdominal muscles also contract as they are both part of the core muscles which naturally work together.
- You can facilitate anal sphincter contraction in the seated position by using your hands on the inside of the knees to resist inward movement alternating with moving the hands to the outside of the knees to resist outward movement of knees, hold 5–10 seconds, repeat a few times each way.
- Another way to tell if you are contracting your anal sphincter is sitting on a rolled towel between your legs and slouching slightly forward so you feel pressure on the anus from the towel. When you contract properly, you will feel your anus lift up from the towel.

Strengthening exercise

- Using these techniques, perform anal sphincter strengthening exercises gradually working up 10 repetitions with 10 second hold/20 second rest 3x/day and quick flicks performing 10 repetitions x 2 second hold, 4 second rest 3x/day.