

The Conservative, Non-Pharmacological Solution for Erectile Dysfunction

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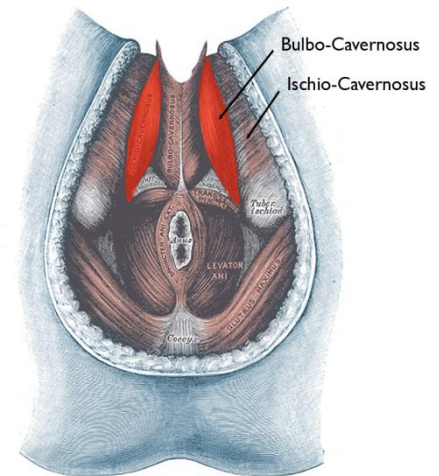
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Among men age 40 to 70, 35% suffer from erectile dysfunction (ED).¹ Research shows the association between successful treatment of ED and improvements in overall physical and emotional well being.² Most men with erectile dysfunction could receive successful therapy. Unfortunately, only about 25% of men ever broach the topic with their healthcare providers. Oddly, a 2003 survey found that 82% of the men who were too embarrassed to complain about ED to their primary care provider (PCP) wished that their PCP had initiated a discussion about ED.³

The health care community now views ED as a symptom of an underlying disease process, rather than a condition unto itself. While the very important possibility of underlying cardiovascular disease has received much attention, the possible involvement of general decline of the perineal muscles also deserves mention. The perineal muscles, specifically the ischiocavernosus and the bulbospongiosus/bulbo-cavernosus, play a role in the maintenance of an erection.⁴ Overactive bladder and other lower urinary tract symptoms involving frequency, urgency, and force of urinary stream are more prevalent in patients with ED and vice versa.^{5,6} The comorbidities point to the involvement of the perineal muscles in ED.

Muscles of the Perineum



Recently, the *British Journal of Urology International* added the randomized controlled trial conducted by Dorey and colleagues to the growing body of literature suggesting pelvic floor exercises as a first-line treatment for ED.⁷ Their treatment group received pelvic floor muscle exercises taught by a physical therapist, biofeedback, and lifestyle change teaching. The control group received only lifestyle change teaching. Fifty-five men, age 20+, with ED lasting greater than six months participated. **The pelvic floor exercise treatment proved beneficial for 76% of men with ED.** Forty percent regained normal erectile function; 35.5% showed improvement; and 24.5% did not respond. Over the past two decades, **multiple studies and reviews have demonstrated the positive effects of guided pelvic floor exercises for men with ED.**^{4,7-14} Most favorable results (success rates of 55% to 97%) occurred in studies that used a combination of exercises, home exercises, biofeedback, and electrical stimulation.^{7,10-13}

Prescribing qualified physical therapy presents numerous advantages for your patients with ED. Most importantly, physical therapy teaches patients to exercise their own pelvic floor muscles, thus empowering your patients to be in charge of their own erectile function long-term. Pelvic floor exercise training may also reverse the general decline of perineal muscle condition and prevent the problem from progressing to an incontinence issue. Pelvic floor exercises are painless; there are no risks; there are **no side effects**. When treatment is successful, **erections are naturally spontaneous**, rather than depending on the timing of medication.

Qualified pelvic floor therapy for erectile dysfunction is available at Integrity Rehab, where patients receive "One on One Quality Care." When counseling patients about their options for erectile dysfunction therapy, please tell your patients about Integrity Rehab.

Please offer Integrity Rehab to your patients.

References

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