



Anal Sphincter Exercises and Correct Defaecation

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What is a “Normal” Bowel
Function?



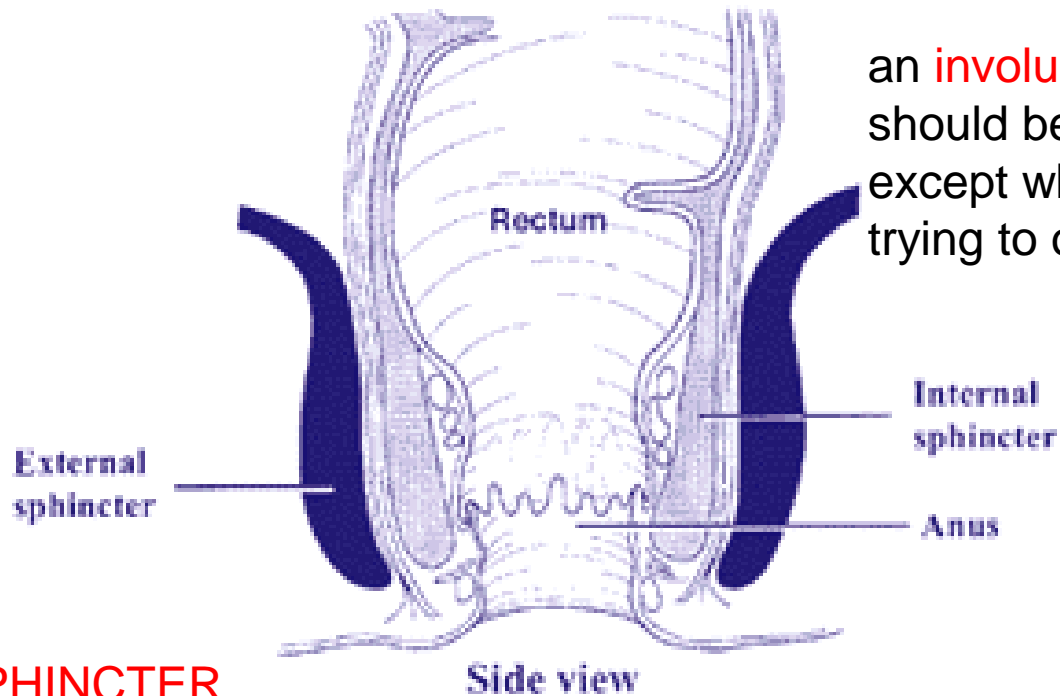
Normal Bowel Function is anything from
3 times a day to once every three days



ANAL MUSCLES

INTERNAL SPHINCTER

an **involuntary** muscle which should be closed at all times, except when you are actually trying to open your bowels.



EXTERNAL SPHINCTER

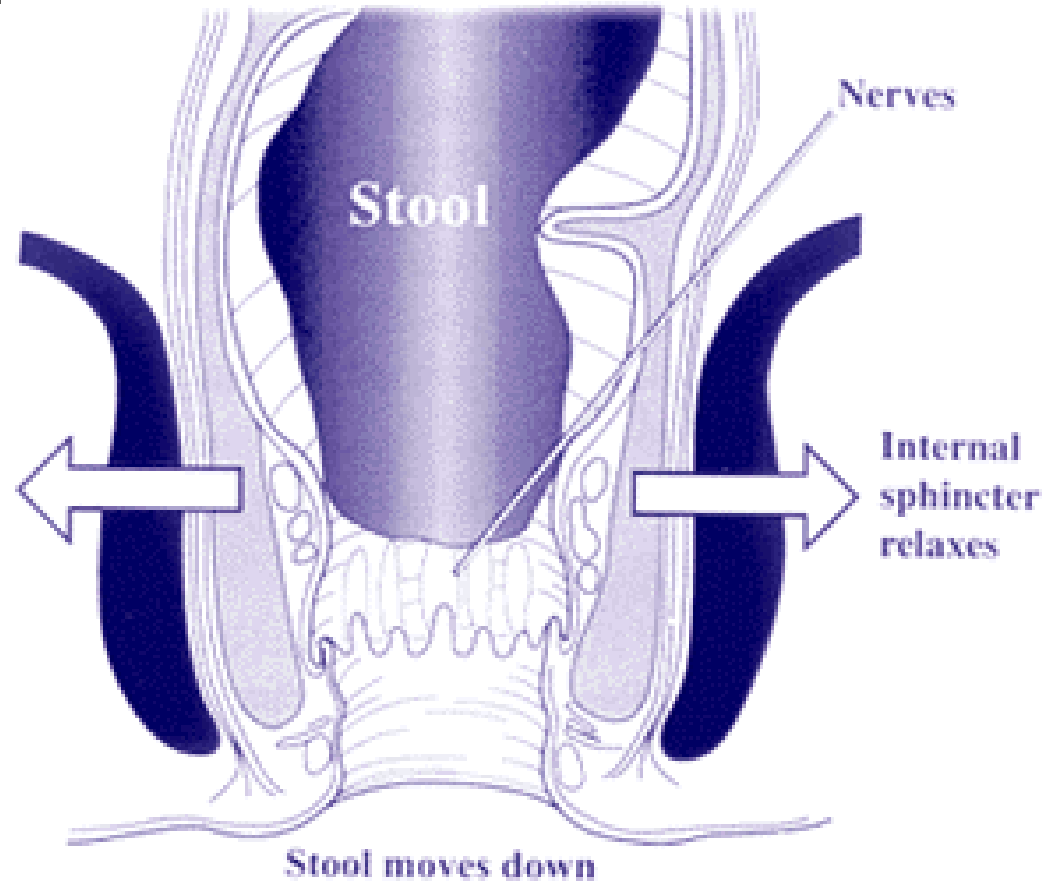
a **voluntary** muscle, which you can tighten up to close it more firmly if you have urgency or diarrhoea.



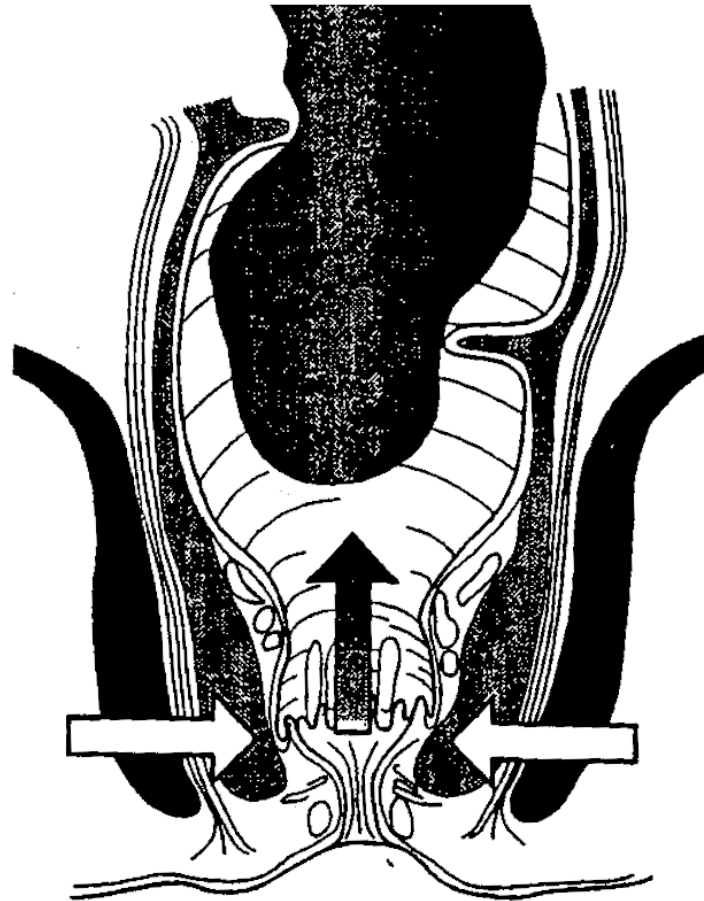
How do these muscles work?

- Both muscles wrap around the anus when a stool comes into the rectum
- The **internal sphincter** relaxes and allows the stool to enter the top part of the anus.
- Very sensitive nerves in the anal canal can tell you if it is gas or stool waiting to come out.
- If it is a stool you squeeze the **external sphincter** to stop it from coming straight out.
- This squeezing moves the stool back into the rectum, where it waits until you get to the toilet.

INTERNAL SPHINCTER AND DEFEACATION



EXTERNAL SPHINCTER AND DEFAECATION

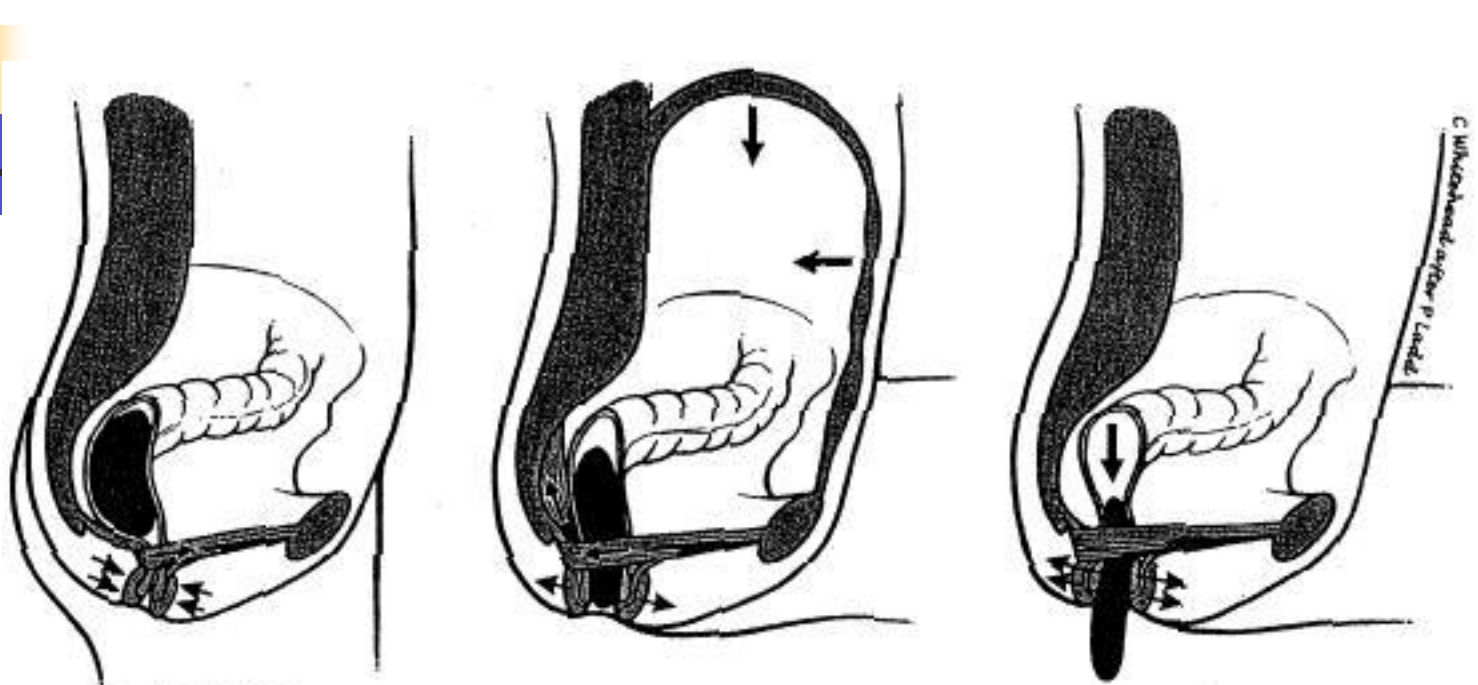


Stool
Returns to
Rectum

External
Sphincter
Squeezes

**EXTERNAL SPHINCTER SQUEEZES
TO DEFER DEFAECATION**

ACT OF DEFAECATION



A. HOLDING

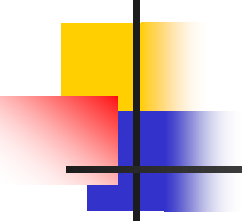
- Puborectalis, external and internal anal sphincters contracted

B. INITIATION

- Puborectalis and external anal sphincter relax
- Levator ani, abdominals and diaphragm contract

C. COMPLETION

- Internal and external anal sphincters relax
- *Rectum contracts*



Common Problems after Low Anterior Resection

- **'Anterior Resection Syndrome'**, a specific cluster of symptoms including
 - Urgency
 - Frequency
 - Stool Fragmentation
 - Feeling of Incomplete Emptying
 - Soiling- daytime/nighttime



Long term Outcome

- Research has shown that function improves with time
- Most improvement between 3-6 months
- Use of medication- loperamide, fybogel, senna
- Timing of Stoma reversal ?



Anal Sphincter Exercises

- Sphincter exercises can help to improve bowel control.
- When done correctly, these exercises can build up and strengthen the muscles to help hold both gas and stool in the back passage.
- As with any other muscle, the more you use and exercise them, the stronger the sphincter muscles will be.



Anal Sphincter Exercises

1. Imagine you are trying to stop yourself passing wind from the bowel –
 - **tighten by squeezing and lifting** the muscle around your **back passage** and feel the muscle move upwards.
 - You should be aware of the skin around the back passage tightening and being pulled up and away from your chair .
2. Now imagine you are passing urine and **tighten** the muscles around the **front passage**, as if to stop mid stream.
3. Now do 1 and 2 together.



Anal Sphincter Exercises

4. **Tighten around the back passage** and try to move the contraction forwards to include the front passage –
 - imagine the **squeeze and upward lift**, which this will produce.
 - Hold the contraction for a few moments then relax completely before trying again

NOTE: when you squeeze as tightly as you can, you can only hold for a few moments, as the muscle will tire quickly.

Anal Sphincter Exercises

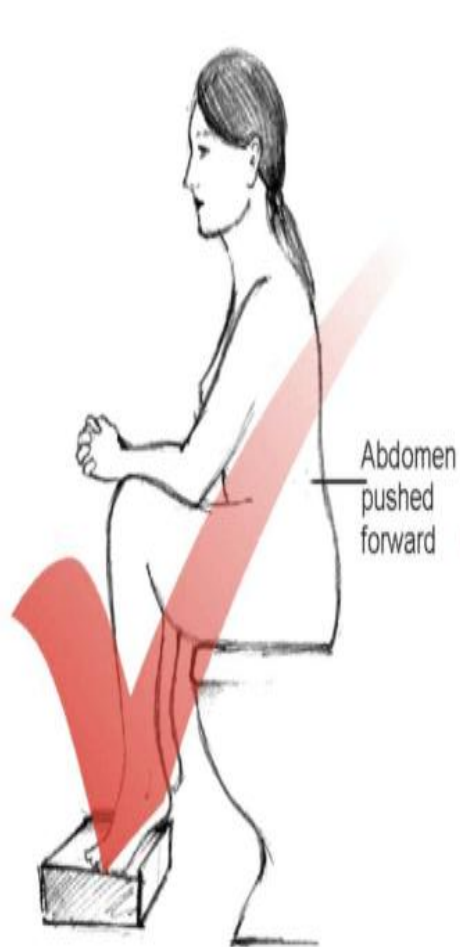
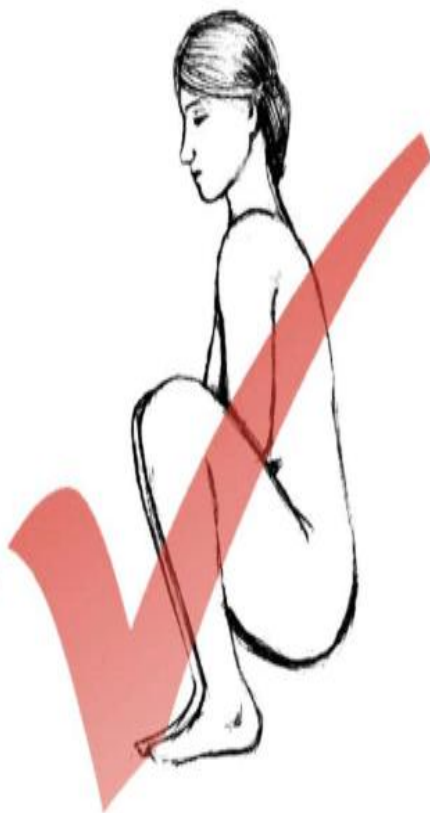
Make sure you do not:

- tighten your buttocks
- breathe & hold
- tighten abdominal muscles

If you do any of these things you are **NOT** exercising correctly.



CORRECT POSTURE FOR DEFAECATION



THANK YOU AND ANY
QUESTIONS?

