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PATIENT GUIDE

Erectile Dysfunction: Lifestyle, Exercise & Mind

Erectile dysfunction (ED) — difficulty getting or keeping an erection firm enough for sex — is very common, and it is treatable. Erections depend on healthy blood vessels, nerves, hormones and a relaxed mind, so the habits that protect your heart also protect your erections. For many men, lifestyle changes alone bring real improvement, and they make medical treatments work better too.

ED CAN BE AN EARLY WARNING SIGN FOR YOUR HEART

The small blood vessels of the penis often show damage **before** the larger heart arteries. ED can appear a few years before a heart attack or stroke. So please don't just treat the symptom — let us check your **blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, weight and heart health**, and your testosterone if needed.

YOUR ED CARE PYRAMID — every level supports the one above; medicines work best when the foundations are strong

Build from the base up



YOUR UROLOGIST



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FOOD

Eating for better erections

Men who follow a **Mediterranean-style diet** — rich in vegetables, fruit, whole grains, pulses, nuts and healthy oils, with little processed food — have lower rates of ED. Here is how that looks on an Indian plate:

ENJOY OFTEN	IN MODERATION	LIMIT OR AVOID
Vegetables of every colour, salads	Ghee, butter, full-fat dairy	Fried snacks: samosa, pakora, bhajia
Fruit, especially berries, citrus, pomegranate, guava	Red meat, eggs	Processed meats, packaged and instant foods
Dal, rajma, chana, sprouts	White rice, maida, sweets	Sugary drinks, packaged juices, energy drinks
Whole grains: millets, oats, brown rice, whole wheat	Salt — under 5 g a day	Vanaspati and reused frying oil
Nuts and seeds: walnuts, almonds, flaxseed	Tea and coffee	Heavy or binge drinking
Fish; mustard, olive or groundnut oil in small amounts		

Weight, alcohol and tobacco

- **Waist size matters.** For Indian men, aim for a waist under 90 cm (35 inches). Losing even 5–10% of your weight can improve erections.
- **Alcohol:** a little may lower inhibitions, but more than a small amount reduces erections. Keep it minimal, and avoid binge drinking.
- **Stop all tobacco** — cigarettes, beedi, gutka, khaini and vaping. Erections often improve within months of quitting.
- Avoid recreational drugs and **anabolic steroids**, which can shut down your own testosterone.

EXERCISE

How much exercise, and what kind?

Studies show that about **40 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic exercise, four times a week** (around 160 minutes) improves erections within about 6 months. Make **cardio the foundation** — roughly two-thirds of your training time — and add **strength training on 2 days** a week.

A SAMPLE WEEK

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Cardio 40 min	Strength 30 min	Cardio 40 min	Yoga / walk easy	Cardio 40 min	Strength 30 min	Rest

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Cardio (aerobic)
What: brisk walking, jogging, swimming, cycling, dancing, skipping, sports.
How hard: breathing faster, able to talk but not sing.
Why: improves blood flow, blood pressure, sugar and weight.

Strength (resistance)
What: squats, lunges, push-ups, bands, weights.
How much: 2 sessions a week, all major muscle groups, 2–3 sets of 8–12 repetitions.
Why: builds muscle, helps insulin and testosterone.

Flexibility and yoga
Stretching, yoga and walking on rest days support recovery and lower stress.

Start safely
Begin gently if you are unfit, and build up over weeks. **Check with your doctor first** if you have heart disease, chest pain or breathlessness on exertion.

A NOTE ON CYCLING

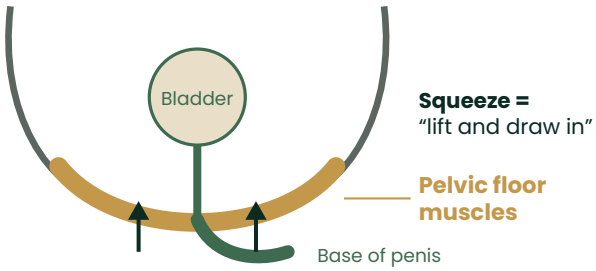
Long hours on a hard, narrow saddle can press on the nerves and blood vessels between the legs. If you cycle a lot, use a well-padded or noseless saddle, set the right height, stand up on the pedals every 10–15 minutes, and stop if you notice numbness.

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

Strengthening the erection muscles

The **pelvic floor muscles** wrap around the base of the penis. When they contract, they help trap blood in the penis and keep the erection firm. In studies, a few months of regular pelvic floor training improved erections in many men.

WHERE ARE THE MUSCLES?



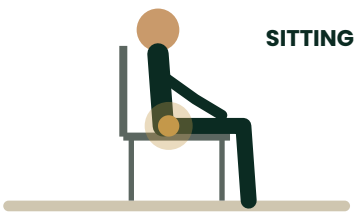
PRACTISE IN THREE POSITIONS

LYING



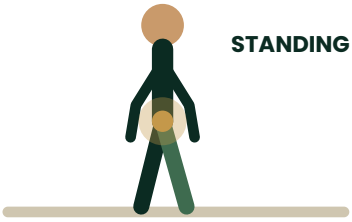
Lie on your back, knees bent.

SITTING



Sit upright, feet flat on the floor.

STANDING



Stand with feet hip-width apart.

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How to do them

- **Find the muscles:** imagine stopping yourself passing wind and stopping the flow of urine at the same time. You should feel the base of the penis draw in and lift, and the testicles rise slightly. Do **not** practise by repeatedly stopping your urine flow.
- **Strong holds:** squeeze as hard as you can and hold for up to 10 seconds, then relax fully for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.
- **Quick squeezes:** squeeze strongly for 1 second, then relax. Repeat 10 times.
- **How often:** one set lying, one sitting and one standing every day. Keep breathing, and keep your tummy, buttocks and thighs relaxed.
- **Be patient:** most men notice a difference after about 3 months. Then keep going, and use a gentle squeeze during sex to help maintain firmness.

THE MIND

Stress, anxiety and mindfulness

Erections begin in the brain. Stress, worry, low mood and **performance anxiety** — fearing the erection will fail — release stress hormones that work against blood flow. One difficult night can start a cycle of worry. Breaking that cycle helps.

A SIMPLE DAILY PRACTICE



In through the nose
for 4 seconds

Out slowly
for 6 seconds

Mindfulness that helps

- **Slow breathing:** 5 minutes a day, breathing in for 4 seconds and out for 6. It calms the stress response.
- **Body scan:** lying down, slowly move your attention from toes to head, noticing sensations without judging them.
- **During intimacy:** focus on touch, warmth and your partner rather than on watching your erection. Pleasure first, performance second.
- **Sensate focus:** a step-by-step programme for couples, starting with non-sexual touch with no pressure to have intercourse. We can guide you.
- If you feel persistently low, anxious or stressed, talking to a counsellor or psychologist can make a big difference.

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Other things that matter

- **Sleep:** aim for 7–8 hours. Loud snoring, gasping at night or daytime sleepiness may mean **sleep apnoea**, which is linked to ED and low testosterone and is treatable.
- **Your partner:** ED affects both of you. Talking openly reduces pressure, and partners are welcome at your consultation.
- **Medicines:** some blood pressure tablets, antidepressants and other medicines can affect erections. **Never stop them yourself** — ask us whether an alternative is possible.
- **Long-term conditions:** keeping diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol well controlled protects your erections.

Supplements (level 4)

Some men try nutritional supplements. Evidence is **modest** — they may help mild ED or support other treatments, but they do not replace the foundations.

- **L-arginine:** helps the body make nitric oxide, which relaxes blood vessels. Studies suggest a small benefit in mild to moderate ED. It can lower blood pressure.
- **L-carnitine:** may support energy and, in some studies, improves response to ED tablets. Evidence is limited.
- **Lycopene:** an antioxidant found in tomatoes and watermelon. Getting it from food is a good start.
- Choose single-ingredient products from reputable, licensed manufacturers, and **check with your doctor first** if you take blood pressure or heart medicines.

SOS and medical treatments (level 5)

TREATMENT	WHAT IT INVOLVES
Tablets (SOS)	Sildenafil or tadalafil, taken on demand and only on prescription. They help when there is sexual arousal. They must **never** be taken with nitrate heart medicines.
Vacuum device	A cylinder and pump that draws blood into the penis, with a ring to maintain the erection.
Injections	A small injection into the side of the penis that produces an erection within minutes.
Penile implant	A device placed surgically, for men who do not respond to other treatments. Highly satisfying for most couples.

BEWARE OF "HERBAL" SEX BOOSTERS AND ONLINE PILLS

- Many products sold as natural or ayurvedic sex enhancers have been found to contain **hidden prescription drugs** in unknown doses.
- These can cause dangerous drops in blood pressure, especially with heart medicines. Please use only treatments prescribed after a proper assessment.

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When to seek help

USUALLY NOT A CONCERN	CONTACT US OR GO TO EMERGENCY
• Occasional difficulty with erections when tired, stressed or after alcohol • Mild headache, flushing or a blocked nose after ED tablets	• **Chest pain** during exercise or sex — stop and seek help • An erection lasting **more than 4 hours** — this is an emergency • Sudden loss of vision or hearing after ED tablets • A new bend, lump or pain in the penis

IN AN EMERGENCY: call **+91 97465 52559** or go to the nearest hospital emergency department. Tell them about any ED medicines you have taken.

MY PERSONAL PLAN (to be filled in at your consultation)

Tests advised _____

Exercise plan _____

Pelvic floor programme _____

Treatment _____

Next review _____

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SCAN TO FOLLOW

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This leaflet provides general information for patients and partners. It does not replace individual medical advice. Please speak to your doctor before starting a new exercise programme or any medicine. Content based on current EAU (European Association of Urology) guidelines on sexual and reproductive health and the AUA (American Urological Association) guideline on erectile dysfunction.