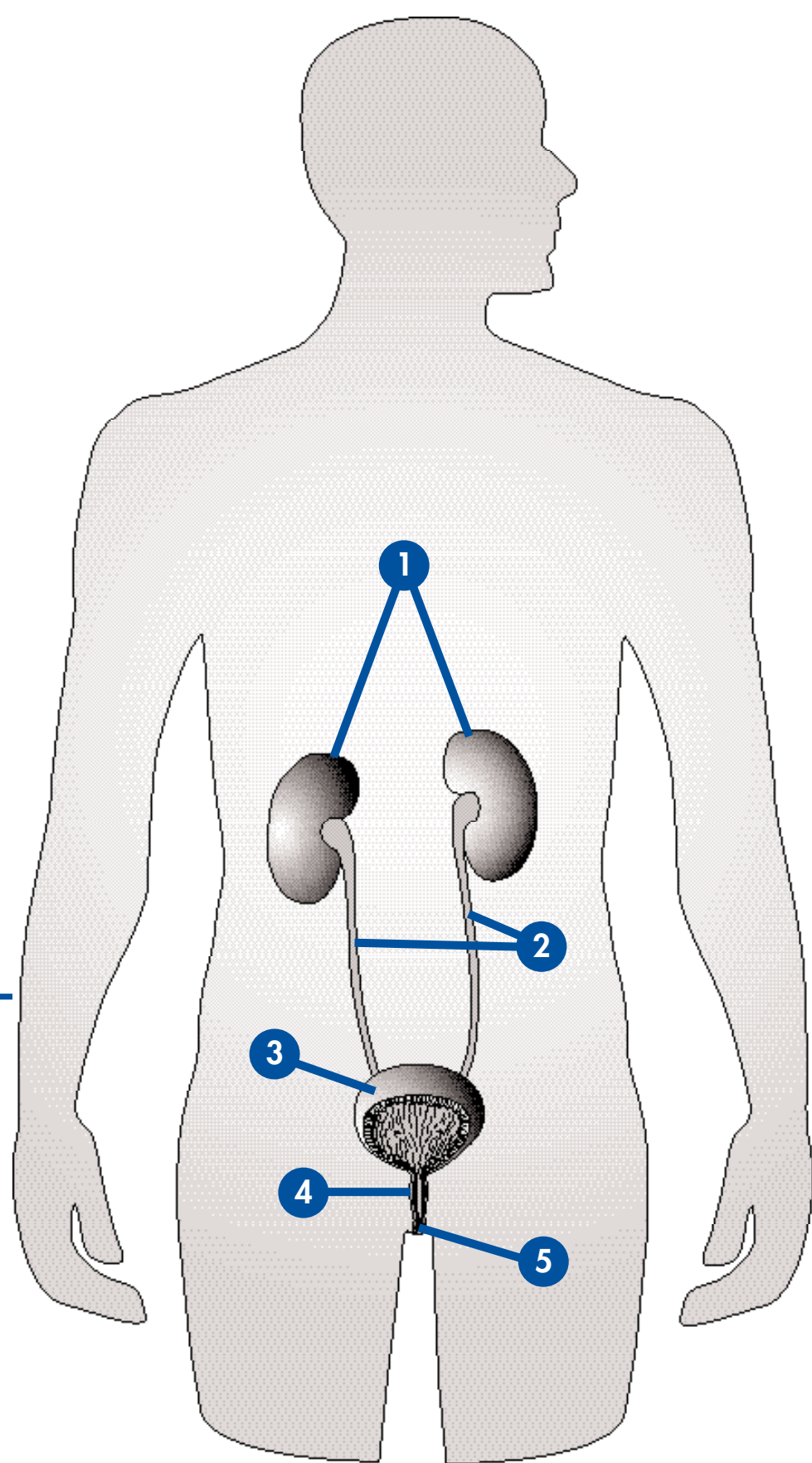


# The Pelvic Floor Muscles

The shelflike pelvic floor is comprised of a group of muscles and nerves **that function as a single unit**. Their purpose is to support the pelvic organs, including the bladder. Nearly all of the pelvic muscles are under voluntary control, meaning you can make them stronger and more responsive through exercise.

## Correct Performance of Pelvic Muscle Exercises

Gender-specific sensations are present when pelvic muscle exercises are performed correctly. A woman will feel her vagina and anus tighten and lift upward toward her abdomen. A man will feel his testes and anus lift upward toward his abdomen. During the exercises, breath normally and keep the abdomen, buttocks, and thighs relaxed.



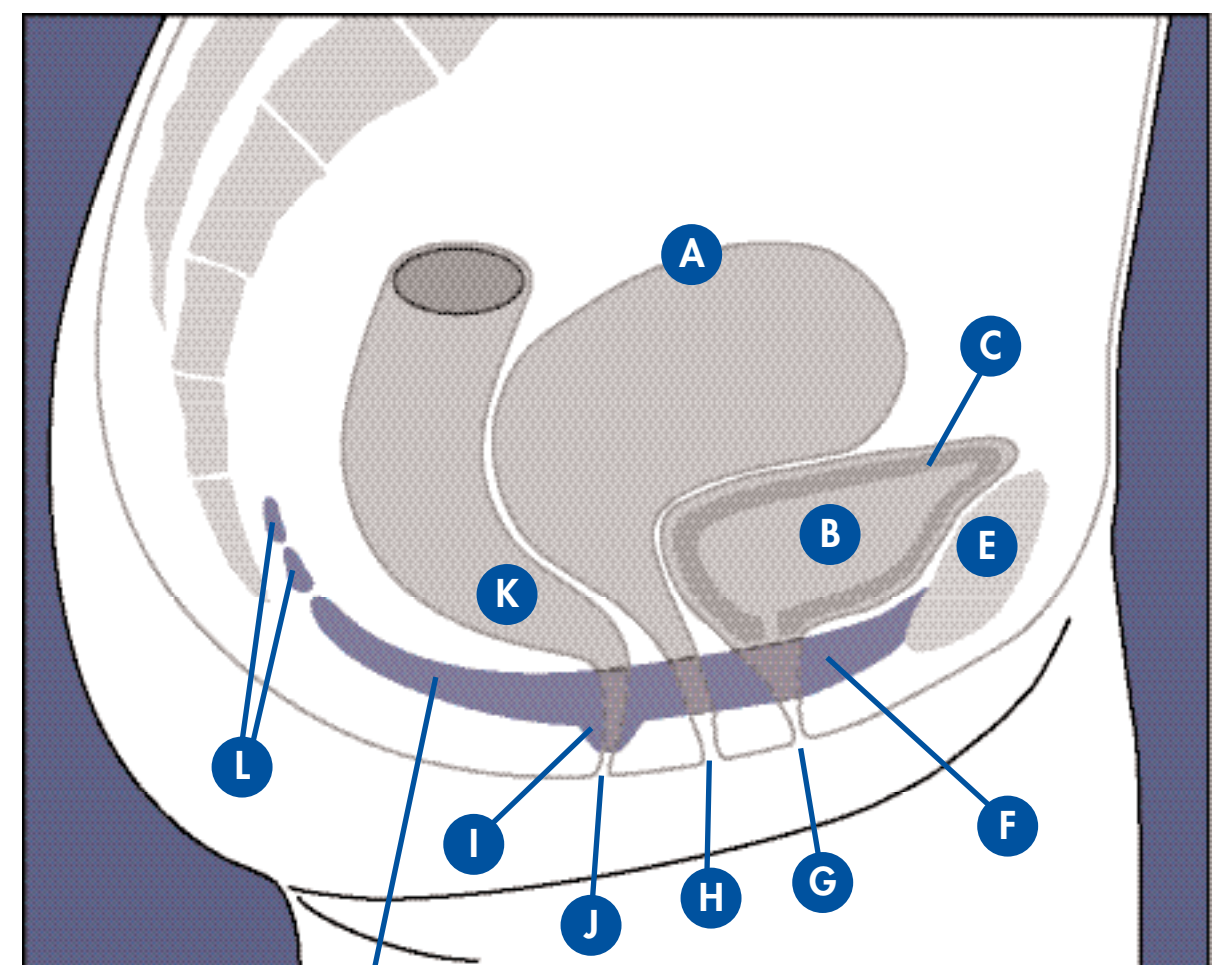
## The Urinary Tract (Non-Gender-Specific)

The kidneys **1** filter waste and water from the blood to make urine, which leaves the kidneys through the ureters **2** and enters the bladder **3**. Nerves inside the bladder wall (detrusor muscle) alert the brain that the bladder is full. The brain signals the sphincter muscle **4** to relax, allowing urine to exit through the urethra **5**.

Legend

- A Uterus
- B Bladder
- C Detrusor Muscle
- D Prostate
- E Pubic Bone
- F Urethral Sphincter
- G Urethra
- H Vagina
- I Anal Sphincter
- J Anus
- K Rectum
- L Pelvic Girdle Muscles

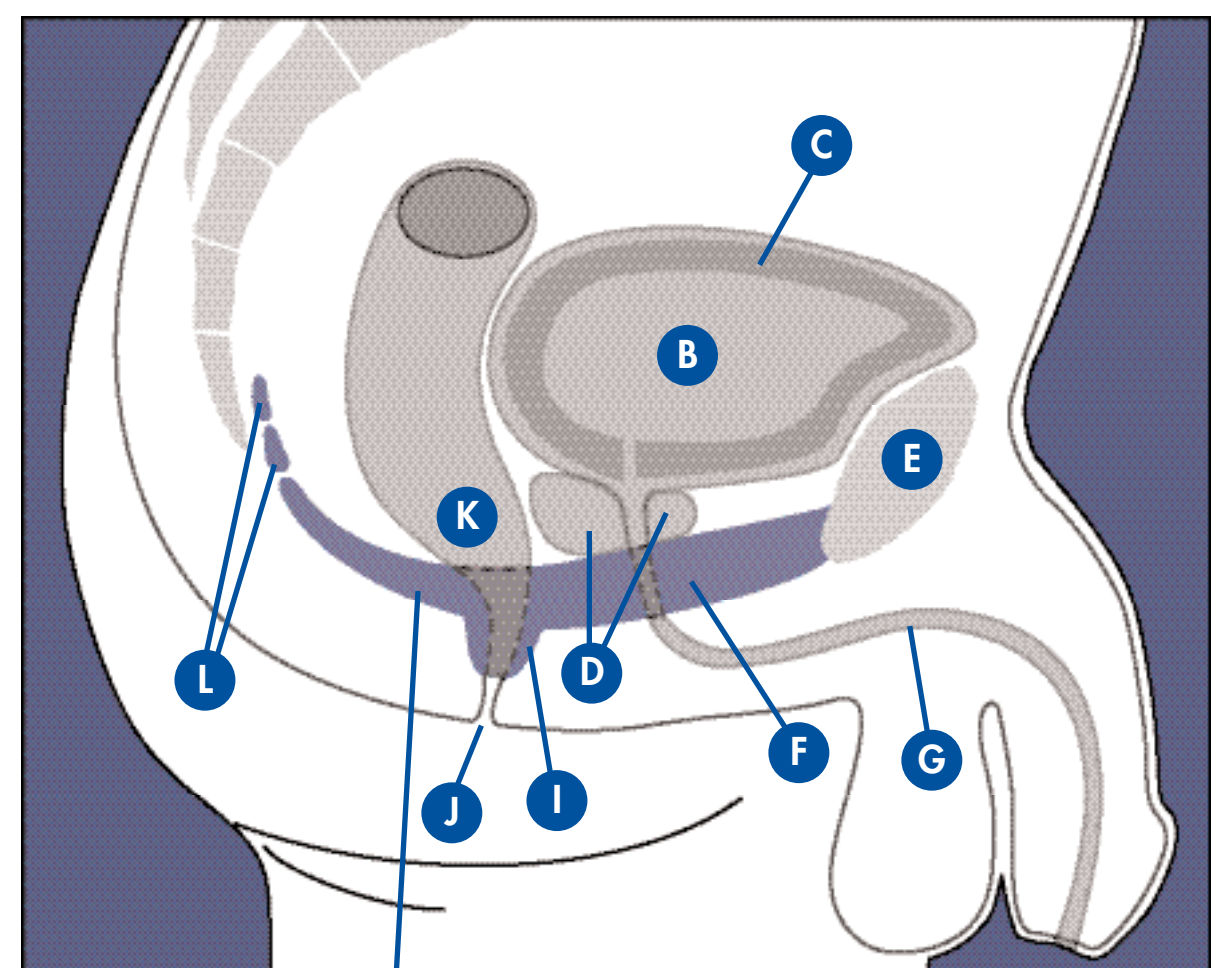
## Side View of Female Pelvis



### • Pelvic Floor Muscles:

- Levator Ani
- Sphincters
- and Others

## Side View of Male Pelvis



### • Pelvic Floor Muscles:

- Levator Ani
- Sphincters
- and Others



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Information for this poster courtesy of Mikel Gray, PhD, Nurse Practitioner and Professor, Department of Urology and School of Nursing, University of Virginia; and Lisa Neu, BS, RN, CRNP

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