

**Mind over
bladder:
You can do it!**

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Self-managing your urinary symptoms

Do you leak urine when you do not want to?

If so, you are not alone. Urinary leakage (urinary incontinence) is a common problem for women and men. Up to 50% of older women have urinary leakage; one in 5 men over the age of 65 have this problem.

- Urinary leakage can happen when you cough or sneeze. This is called stress incontinence.
- You can also have a sudden urge to pass urine and not be able to reach the toilet before leaking urine. This is called urge incontinence.

Urinary leakage is not just a part of getting older. You do not have to live with it. There are factors that can worsen your urinary leakage. This tool will help you to change some of these factors. You could also speak to a nurse or doctor about available treatment options for you.

THE FIRST THING TO DO is to record in a bladder diary how often you leak urine. Here is an example:

I have done the pelvic floor exercises today. <input type="checkbox"/>			
I have changed the following factor : _____			
Date :	Type and quantity of fluid taken	Used the toilet	Accidentally leaked urine
6-8 am	6 oz. coffee, 6 oz. juice	✓✓	✓
8-10 am	2 coffees = 12 oz.	✓✓	✓
10-12 am	8 oz. water	✓	
12 am –2 pm	4 oz. juice, 1 c soup	✓	
2-4 pm	8 oz. water	✓✓	
4-6 pm	8 oz. wine	✓✓	✓
6-8 pm	1 cup tea	✓✓	✓
8-10 pm	8 oz. soft drink	✓	✓
10 pm –12 am	8 oz. milk	✓	✓
12-2 am			
2-4 am		✓	✓
4-6 am	4 oz. water	✓	

How to fill in a bladder diary?

In each time slot, indicate how much of what drink you had, make a check mark each time you use the toilet or leak urine accidentally.

THE NEXT THING TO DO is to look over the factors listed below. This guide presents suggestions to help you apply those changes in your daily life.

<input type="checkbox"/> Factor 1: Pelvic floor muscle strength	p 6
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<input type="checkbox"/> Factor 3: Fluid and food management	p14
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<input type="checkbox"/> Factor 8: Strong and frequent urges	p 19
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- Decide which factors you want to try and change. Check them.
- Try to change only one factor at a time. This will help you measure the impact of each change and decide which ones to keep.
- For each factor you decide to change, you should complete a diary for 3-5 days before and after changing a factor.
- This will help you see which factor (or factors) reduces your urinary symptoms.

Factor 1: Pelvic Floor Muscle Strength

Why?

The pelvic floor muscle holds your bladder, uterus and bowels in place. It can become weak after having a baby or because of lack of exercise or as you get older. A weak pelvic floor muscle may let urine leak. Exercising the pelvic floor muscle (also known as Kegel exercises) regularly may improve or even stop accidental urinary leakage.

How?

- First you need to learn how to identify the right muscle.

Tips on locating the pelvic floor muscle

Tip 1

Women can insert two fingers into their vagina and contract. Men can try to squeeze and lift their penis. You should feel a gentle squeeze when tightening the right muscle.

Tip 2

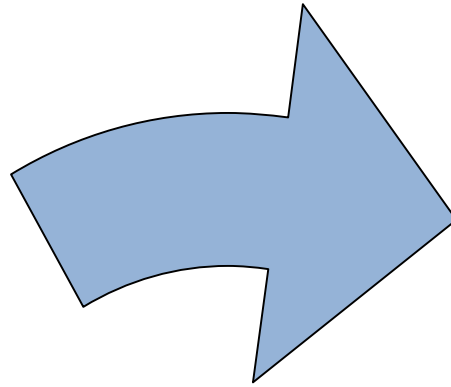
You can also visualize bringing your tailbone toward your pubic bone. Using that image might get your pelvic floor muscles into a working contraction.

Your doctor, nurse or physiotherapist can help you determine which muscle to contract and make sure you are doing it properly by checking you during a pelvic examination.

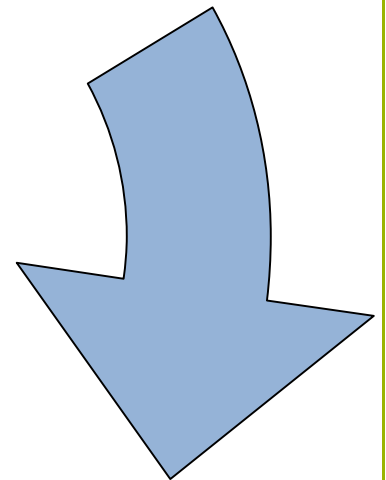
- Try to squeeze the muscles that prevent you from emptying your bladder or allow you to hold in flatulence.
- Try not to tighten your buttocks or stomach muscles. Do not hold your breathe.
- There are 3 types of exercises: strength, coordination, endurance. The strengthening programme is divided into 12 weeks, increasing the level of difficulty every 4 weeks.
 - Weeks 1 - 4: do the exercises lying down, knees bent, feet slightly apart and arms resting alongside your body.
 - Weeks 5 – 8: exercises are practiced sitting down, with your feet flat on the floor.
 - Weeks 9 – 12: exercises are done standing up, feet shoulder-width apart. If you have trouble holding your balance, hold on to the back of a chair.
- After completing the 12-week program, continue to perform the exercises regularly to keep your muscle strong.

In summary:

1.
Locate your
pelvic floor
muscle

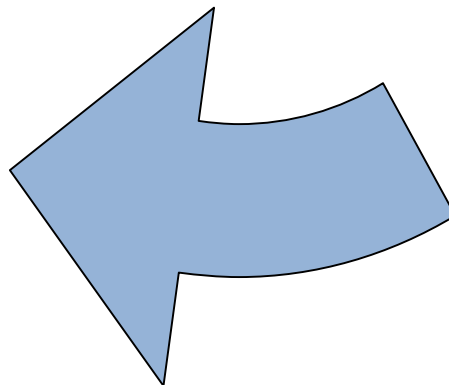


2.
Practice the
exercise
programme
every day



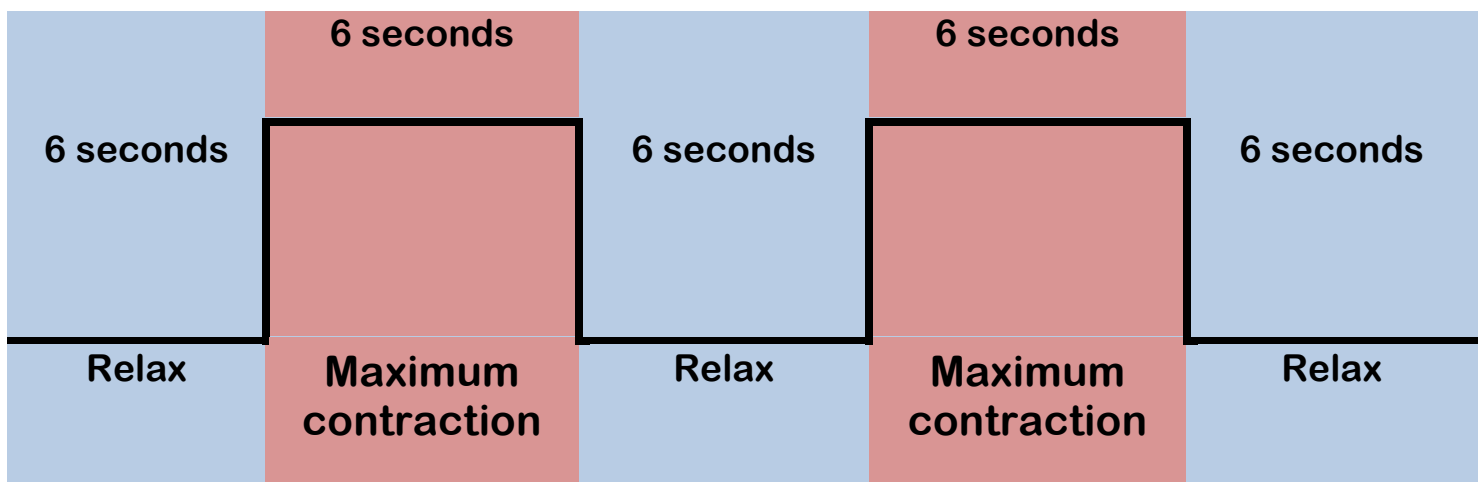
3.
Rest well
between
each set

4.
The benefits of
these exercises
will continue
ONLY as long
as you do
them!



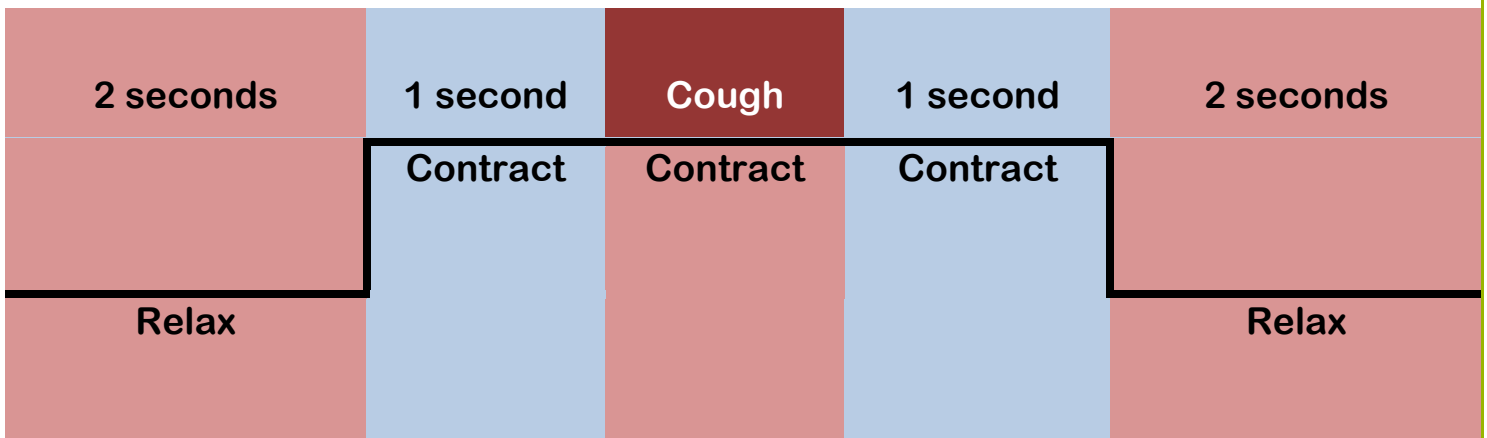
❖ Strength exercises

- Exhale slowly through your mouth.
- Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles as hard as you can and hold for 6 seconds (count slowly and aloud). *You should feel the muscles around your urethra and vagina tightening inward and upward.*
- Breathe normally.
- Relax completely for 6 seconds.
- Repeat 10 times to complete one set.
- Do 2 more sets.
- Rest for 1 minute between each set.



❖ Coordination exercises

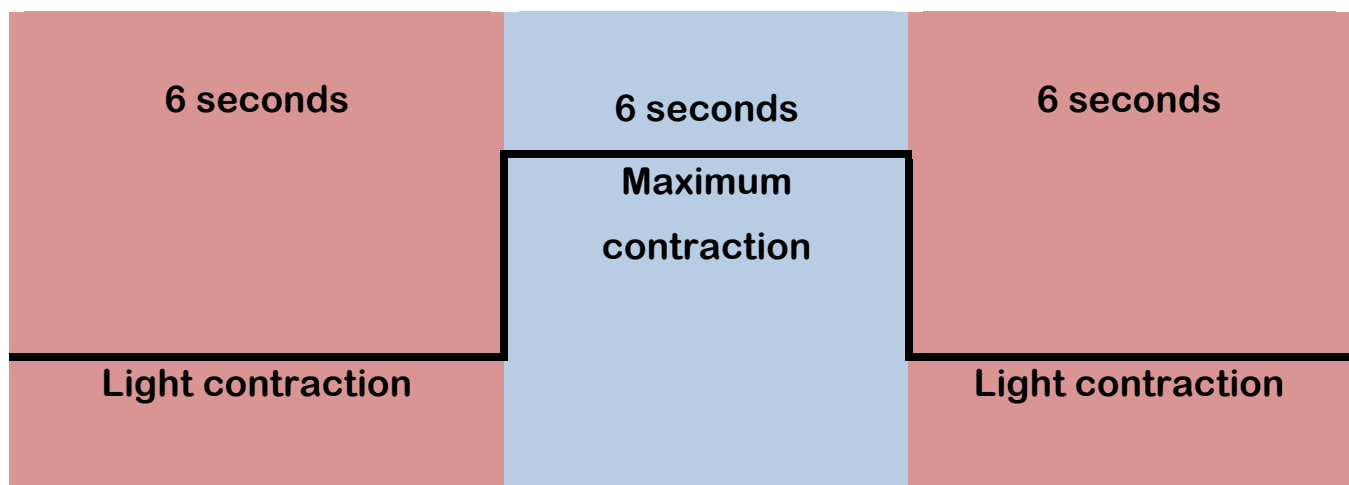
- Exhale slowly through your mouth and then squeeze the pelvic floor muscles as hard as you can.
- Hold the contraction while you cough vigorously.
- Relax completely for 2 seconds.
- Repeat this exercise 3 times to complete one set.
- Do 2 more sets.
- Rest for 30 seconds between each set.



❖ Endurance exercises

- Exhale slowly through your mouth and then squeeze the pelvic floor muscles lightly for 6 seconds.
- Increase the contraction to the maximum and hold for 6 seconds.
- Decrease the contraction slightly and hold for 6 seconds more.
- Relax completely for 20 seconds.
- Repeat two more times.

Remember: Breathe normally during the contractions.



Tips:

- Breathe normally. Do not hold your breath.
- Pick a fixed time during the day when you know you will have 15 minutes to perform the exercises. Make them part of your daily routine.
- Remember to relax your buttocks and the inside of your thighs in order to contract only the pelvic floor muscles.
- If you cannot squeeze your muscles for a count of 6 start by counting to 2.
- You must relax your muscles for the same amount of time as you squeeze them.
- After completing the 12-week program, continue to perform the exercises regularly to keep your muscle strong.

Use the bladder diary to keep track of the impact of this factor on your bladder problems.

Factor 2: Caffeine

Why?

- Caffeinated drinks and food include: coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate.
- Even 1 cup of coffee or tea may have too much caffeine for your bladder.
- Caffeine is a diuretic. It can increase the amount of urine you produce. This can make you urinate more often or even leak urine.



How?

- Try to reduce or avoid drinks with caffeine for 2 weeks. You may find that decaffeinated coffee or tea is a good option. You can also try warm milk, hot water with a bit of lemon, ginger or mint.
- To track your urinary symptoms before and after you make this change use the bladder diary. Continue applying this change if the amount of urine you leak decreases or stops.

Factor 3: Fluid and food management

Why?

- It is recommended to take between 1L to 1.5L of liquid per day, but not more. Remember that fluids come from any beverage you drink and from foods such as soup.
- Different types of food and drinks may irritate your bladder or contribute to urine leakage: caffeine, alcohol, citrus and acidic fruits and juices (orange, lemon, grapefruit, lime, pineapple, tomato), spicy foods.
- As we get older we produce more urine at night. This is a normal part of ageing. It relates to changes in body make-up and how water is managed by the body.

How?

- Try to avoid drinking fluids in the evening and night.
- Limit the types of food and drinks that can irritate your bladder.
- Use your bladder diary to track the impact of applying these changes.

Factor 4: Body Weight



Why?

- Urinary leakage is more likely to occur if you are overweight as it increases the pressure on your pelvic floor muscle.

How?

- If you are overweight, losing some weight may improve your urinary leakage.
- Weight loss is best done by changing your eating habits and exercising.
- Eat healthy. It is suggested that every day you eat: 6 servings of grains, 7 servings of vegetables and fruits, 3 servings of milk and milk products, and 2 servings of meat and/or meat alternatives.

To lose weight:

- 1) Eat at regular intervals with smaller portions. Choose from a variety of products.
- 2) You can still eat desserts, but in small portions.
- 3) Exercise is a good way to help you lose weight. Walking is a type of exercise. If you notice that urine leaks when you exercise, try to empty your bladder before exercising. Strengthening your pelvic floor muscle with the exercises described in pages 7 to 9 of this guide could also help.

Factor 5: Sensory problems due to aging

Why?

- Problems with vision or mobility can worsen urinary leakage, because they can make it harder to safely get to the bathroom in time.
- As you age, you lose contrast and visual acuity as well as touch sensitivity, which make the messages sent to your brain less accurate. Some people lose balance.

How?

- You need to be vigilant when you get up at night to go to the bathroom. Remove objects that might be blocking your pathway to the toilet. Consider placing nightlights to light the path to the toilet at night.
- You might want to have your eyes checked by your doctor or join a Tai Chi class to improve your balance.
- As you make these changes keep track of how it affects your symptoms. Use the bladder diary to track your symptoms. Continue applying this change if the amount of urine you leak decreases or stops.

Factor 6: Smoking

Why?

- Tobacco smoking can cause urinary leakage, as it often causes chronic cough.
- People who smoke cigarettes have a higher risk of bladder cancer. When they inhale tobacco smoke, chemicals filter into their urine. These chemicals can cause cells in the bladder to become cancerous. It doesn't matter how much a person smokes. Even if someone smokes 1 cigarette a day, one still has a higher risk of bladder cancer than a non-smoker.



How?

- Quitting may improve your urinary leakage and your overall health. There are several tools that can help you quit smoking. These include nicotine gums and patches. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist about the best way for you to stop smoking.

Factor 7: Medications

Why?

- Certain medication can lead to urinary incontinence, like diuretics/water tablets for example. Water pills increase the production of urine, which in turn increases your need to urinate.
- Leg swelling (edema) can cause an increase in urinary frequency at night, as the water accumulated in your legs during the day returns to your bladder at night when you lie down.
- Certain medications can make you drowsy and make it more difficult for you to wake up in time to get to the bathroom at night.



How?

- Try sitting with your feet up (on the same level or higher than your heart) during the day or using support stockings to reduce edema.
- If you experience any of these symptoms, consult your physician or your pharmacist.

Factor 8: Strong and Frequent Urges

Why?

Does this happen to you? You are coming home after shopping and as soon as you put the key in the door, you feel an uncontrollable urge to empty your bladder. Or when you hear the water running? Your bladder could be overactive. If so, you can regain control of your bladder with urge suppression techniques like these.

How?

❖ Urge suppression techniques

1. When you feel a strong urge to urinate, stop, stand still or sit down if possible and do not move.
2. Contract your pelvic floor muscles quickly and strongly 5 or 6 times or maintain a strong contraction for 8 to 10 seconds.
3. Take deep breaths and try to relax.



When the urge has subsided, walk normally to the bathroom to empty your bladder. Use this technique each time you need to urinate, until there is at least 2 hours between each time you go to the bathroom.

❖ Distract your brain

Count backwards from 100 or say the alphabet backwards or find a boy's and a girl's name for each letter of the alphabet. Distracting the brain delays the urge to pass urine.

Once the urge has passed, you should wait until the next urge to empty your bladder.

If you still feel the urge, repeat these steps until it has subsided. Then walk normally to the bathroom to empty your bladder.



Adam, Amanda, Barbara, Bernard,....

100, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, ...

Factor 9: Other factors

There are other factors that may be related to your urinary leakage. If you have any of the following you should speak to your doctor:

- Constipation that is not relieved by increasing dietary fiber
- Back problems or arthritis
- Pain with urinating
- Continuous leakage of urine
- Blood in the urine
- Repeated urinary infections
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Memory problems
- Parkinson's disease
- Difficulty walking or in daily living activities

Copy this bladder
diary page for your
records (as many as
needed)

I have done the pelvic floor exercises today.

I have changed the following factor : _____

Date :	Type and quantity of fluid taken	Used the toilet	Accidentally leaked urine
6-8 am			
8-10 am			
10-12 am			
12 am –2 pm			
2-4 pm			
4-6 pm			
6-8 pm			
8-10 pm			
10 pm –12 am			
12-2 am			
2-4 am			
4-6 am			

Thank You
And
Good Luck!