

Caring for your Bladder: Preventing Urine Leakage

Did you know...

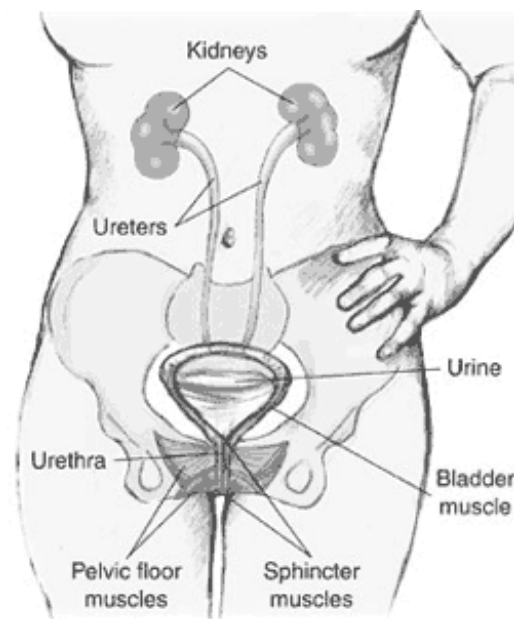
1 in 2 women over age 50 experience urine leakage?
But you can start preventing symptoms today!



It's never too early,
or too late, to improve
your bladder health!

How does a healthy bladder work?

Urine (pee) is made by the kidneys and is stored in a muscle called the **bladder** until you are ready to empty. When you go to the bathroom, the urine exits your body through a tube called the **urethra**. Your **pelvic floor muscles** and **sphincter muscles** help hold urine inside until you are ready to go to the bathroom. If these muscles become weak or damaged, urine may leak.



Urine Leakage

There are a few different types of urine leakage, which is also called **incontinence**:

1. **Stress incontinence**: Happens when we cough, laugh, sneeze, lift something heavy, or when we exercise
2. **Urge incontinence**: Happens when we get an urge to empty, but can't get to the bathroom soon enough
3. **Mixed incontinence**: When we have both stress and urge incontinence

Would having urine leakage impact your life? Does it impact your life already?



We have good news! Scientists have found that teaching women how to care for their bladder can prevent them from leaking. If you already experience leakage, these same lessons can help you have fewer leaks.

These 3 simple ways to care for your bladder will help you stay dry all your life!

- 1 Bladder Training
- 2 Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises
- 3 Squeeze Trick

Women who use these techniques have been amazed! They have increased control, fewer leaks, and less urgency to get to the bathroom.

1 Bladder Training



Many women go to the bathroom whenever they have the chance, but it is healthiest to go every 3 to 4 hours! How often do you use the bathroom? If you go more often than every 3 hours, you should use bladder training!

How to train your bladder:

Determine how often you go to the bathroom now. The first week of bladder training, increase the time between your bathroom visits by 15 minutes. The second week, increase the time between your bathroom visits by another 15 minutes. Continue increasing until you can wait 3 hours between bathroom visits!

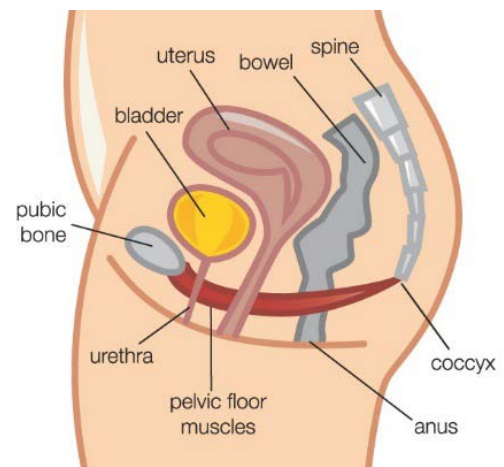
2 Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises



The pelvic floor muscles (pictured in red) support the pelvic organs and control urine leakage. The urethra, vagina, and anus go through the pelvic floor muscles. Many women have urine leakage because these muscles are too weak. strengthening these muscles can **prevent** or **improve** urine leakage.

How to do a pelvic floor contraction:

1. Sit or lie down comfortably on your back or side, breathing evenly
2. Tighten and lift your pelvic floor muscles **upward** and **inwards**
3. Completely relax the muscles, lowering downward and outwards



Tips to find the right muscles:

1. Imagine you're trying to keep from passing gas in a crowded place
2. Pretend you're trying to stop the flow of urine
3. Imagine there is an elevator in your pelvis; close the doors and lift the elevator up to the top floor
4. Imagine picking up a marble with your vagina or anus

Pelvic Floor Muscle Training Guide:

- Do 5 fast contractions: hold each squeeze for 1 second, relax for 1 second between squeezes
- Do 25 slow contractions: practice until you can hold the squeeze for 6 seconds, relax for 10 seconds between squeezes

Try to do these 30 contractions every day, but remember they do not all have to be done at once!

3

Squeeze Trick



Now that you know how to contract your pelvic floor muscles, you can use them whenever you think there's a chance you might leak.

How to use the "Squeeze Trick:"

Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles tightly before you do something that might make you leak, like coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or lifting something heavy.

You can also use the "Squeeze Trick" to make your urge to pee fade away

When you feel the urge to pee, squeeze tightly before you get up to go. This might prevent you from leaking on the way to the bathroom.