

Bladder Training

If you are urinating very frequently, first check that you are not drinking an excessive amount of fluid. If you drink more, you will urinate more!

However, if you are drinking a normal amount of fluid and are still urinating frequently then bladder retraining can help. It can also help reduce the feelings of urgency when the bladder contracts unnecessarily and leaks on the way to the toilet.

Understanding

Firstly, try to understand the messages that your bladder is sending you. When your bladder is full then you need to listen to it, and empty. When it is contracting unnecessarily, you can ignore it. To help you do this, try to think about when you last emptied. Was it just 1 hour ago? In this case it might be a false signal. Was it 3 hours ago? If so, then it is probably time to empty. Try also to think about how much fluid you have drunk. If you have just drunk 1 litre of fluid all in one go, then your bladder might need to empty twice in quick succession.

In addition, try to cut down the visits to the toilet that you make ‘just in case.’ For example, ask yourself if you really do need to go every time you leave the house. If you only went 20 minutes ago, perhaps you don’t. Each time you empty out of habit, rather than when you need to, you are training the bladder to hold less and less urine.

False Signals

If your bladder is giving you false signals to empty, and you know your bladder isn’t full, then there are several tips you might try to help you hold on.

Initially, try to increase the time between visits to the toilet. Start with trying to hold on for just 10 minutes after you feel you need to go. Over time, this can be increased more and more. If you can hold on for your target time and can do this for 3 or 4 days in a row, increase the time again. Gradually increase the time between visits to the toilet until you are going every 2-3 hours during the day.

If you struggle to increase your target time and are getting strong feelings of urgency before your time is up, try some of the following ideas to control this feeling and make the bladder wait. See which ideas work best for you and then use them when you need to.

- Keep calm and don’t panic.
- Stand still or sit down.
- Distract your thoughts by focusing your mind on something else.
- Contract your pelvic floor muscles (a moderate hold of 30 seconds for 3 times works best).
- Stand on your tip toes or curl down your toes.
- Cross your legs.

- Press or rub on the backs of your thighs.
- Press an inch above the inside ankle bone.
- Gently press over the urethra in an upward direction.
- Wait until the urgency passes, up to 30 seconds, then carry on with your activity or go to the toilet if appropriate.
- You may need to repeat some of these tips on the way to the bathroom such as walking there on your tip toes.

Your bladder may have taken a long time to establish its bad habits, so you will not regain your bladder control instantly. It will take time, commitment, and patience to train your bladder. Most people notice some improvement within 2 weeks, although it may take 3 months or more to regain bladder control.