



The bladder training programme

Why do I need to train my bladder?

- Symptoms like frequency (emptying too often), urgency (feeling desperate to go) or urge incontinence (leaking urine before reaching the toilet) mean that the bladder is not working as it should.
- There are many causes for this, but bladder training can help to get things back to normal.

Bladder training

- When you get the urge to pass urine, try to 'hold on' by ignoring the urge and staying calm.
- Just a minute or two to start with, then gradually increase to half an hour then one hour.
- Have a look at some ideas of how to do this below:

Tips for holding on:

- sit on a hard seat, rolled towel or over the arm of a chair
- press on your pelvic floor/perineum or rub the back of your legs
- tighten your pelvic floor muscles for between 10 and 20 seconds
- if standing, go up and down on your toes or rock from left to right foot
- curl your toes up for 10 seconds or more
- cross your legs
- distract yourself e.g. think about what you are having for dinner, tidy the house, make a list, send a text message, count backwards from 100 in 7s.
- count to 60 before going to the toilet
- stand or sit still for 10 – 20 seconds before calmly walking to the toilet
- keep calm and relaxed. Take deep breaths.

Approaching the toilet:

- When you get to the toilet door, turn your back for a minute and continue your distraction techniques until the urge reduces. Or walk up to and away from the toilet again to demonstrate to your brain that seeing the toilet does not mean it is ok to let the urgency rise.
- Then open the toilet door slowly, close the door slowly. Walk into the bathroom and do something else first. For example, tidy your hair in the mirror. Stand in front of the toilet slowly, pull pants down slowly, sit on toilet and count to five before you relax and let the urine go.

- When you relax to let the urine go, just relax and think about something else. Don't make it into a big reward to go to the toilet. Say to yourself: this is just a normal body function, nothing special.

*Remember- it doesn't matter if the bladder empties against your will at any stage. Ignore it. Use a continence pad so you will feel safe and not be worried about embarrassment. It will get better in a couple of weeks.

*Don't reward bad behaviour. If you rush as soon as you leak, you reinforce this pattern.

You can self-refer to our Bladder & Bowel Care Service. Complete the referral form and email to arti.centralbooking@nhs.net

Bladder & Bowel Care Service
River Place Health Centre
Essex Road
London N1 2DE

Telephone: 020 3316 8401

Open Monday – Friday 09:00 – 17:00

Resources at Whittington Health

Pelvic Health Physiotherapist – Tel: 020 7288 5660
whh-tr.outpatienttherapy@nhs.net

Assessment and treatment by referral only

Community Bladder and Bowel service for Haringey and Islington residents, GP and self-referral:
<https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/default.asp?c=33288>

Telephone: 0203 316 8401/8398

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy, maternity and consultant referral

<https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/?c=42977>

Whittington leaflets

<http://www.whittington.nhs.uk/default.asp?c=9260>

Further resources

Pelvic, obstetric and gynaecological physiotherapy

For leaflets including 'Management of Urinary Frequency, Urgency and Urge Incontinence' visit https://thepogp.co.uk/patient_information/

Bladder and Bowel Community

<https://www.bladderandbowel.org/>

Email: help@bladderandbowel.org

Bladder Health UK

<https://bladderhealthuk.org/>

Tel: 0121 702 0820 (advice line)

Email: info@bladderhealthuk.org

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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