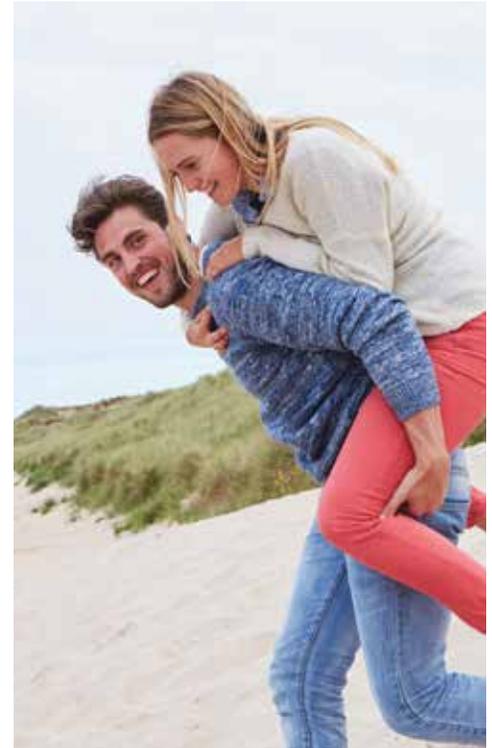


# Behavioral Therapy/Bladder Retraining

Timed voiding or bladder retraining drills are very helpful and usually one of the first lines of therapy for overactive bladder. This excellent treatment is free, completely safe, and effective in improving symptoms in two thirds of patients suffering from this common disorder.

The aim is to slowly stretch the bladder so that it can hold larger and larger volumes of urine. In time, the bladder muscle (detrusor) should become less overactive and you should become more in control of your bladder. This means that more time can elapse between feeling the desire to pass urine and having to get to a toilet. Leakage of urine is then less likely.

Once you get the urge to urinate, the aim of bladder retraining is to hold the urine for as long as possible before going to the restroom. This will seem difficult at first. Try to hold the urine for 5 minutes longer than you normally would and then gradually increase this number over several weeks. With time, it should become easier as the bladder becomes used to holding larger amounts of urine. The idea is to gradually extend the time between toilet trips and to train your bladder to stretch more easily. The goal is to pass urine only 5-6 times in a 24-hour period (about every 3-4 hours).



## 6

### Six Simple Steps to Follow When the Urge Feeling Strikes

1. Stop what you are doing. Sit down or stand quietly and remain still. When you are still, it is easier to control the urge.
2. Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles, quickly, several times. Do not fully relax in-between squeezes.
3. Relax the rest of your body. Take a few deep breaths to help you relax and let go of any tension.
4. Concentrate on suppressing the urge feeling.
5. Wait until the urge subsides.
6. Walk to the bathroom at a normal pace, do not rush, and as you walk, continue to squeeze your pelvic muscles while you walk.

### Examples of Urge episodes that are reported by some of our patients:

- Standing up from a position
- In the early morning when you awaken with a full bladder
- Working at the kitchen sink or in the restroom
- Passing by a restroom (especially at home)
- Rainy days
- Driving into your driveway and getting out of your car at home
- Going out into the cold

Reference: *Staying Dry*, Kathryn L. Burgion PhD, Lynette Pearce, RN, CRNP and Angelo Lucco, MD

#### BE PREPARED

Urgency often strikes when you least expect it. You can prepare for urgency by learning to anticipate when it will strike. As you approach one of these situations – squeeze your pelvic floor muscles quickly several times. This may prevent your urge feeling from starting.

#### START SAFE

Before you have used these techniques, you may be skeptical and fearful of having an accident. Because these are new skills for you, it is possible that your first attempts will not work. Therefore, begin practicing these new approaches in a safe place, such as your home.

With continued practice, you will be able to suppress urgency, so that the urge feeling will be diminished or go away. As you build up your confidence, apply the techniques to other settings. Use the pelvic floor muscle exercises every day and practice the techniques when you have the urge.