

Breathe.

Urinary Leaking and Urgency

There are two main types of leaking. **Stress incontinence** = leaking with cough/laugh/sneeze/jump, and **urge incontinence** = *Really* having to go and leaking before making it to the toilet. Sometimes we have both. Both types can be improved with PT!

Pelvic floor muscles can be tight, weak, or both. **Not everyone needs kegels** (this is a very common misconception).

How does a tight pelvic floor contribute to leaking? The muscles are holding tight all day (like tight shoulder muscles) and then are too tired to do the work of squeezing when we need them to.

Bladder norms

- Urinating 5-8 times per day, and 0-2 times at night
- Amount per void: first of the day = 10-15 oz, later voids = 9-12 oz

Urge strategies

- **Distraction** - sing a song, or count backwards from 100 by 7's (yes, it's hard!) - Calm thoughts and body as you *walk* to the bathroom. Think "**i have plenty of time**" - Breathe and relax your body
- Freeze and Squeeze - stop what you're doing and do several quick and strong kegels.

If you're leaking with cough/sneeze/blowing your nose: try **squeeze before sneeze** - when you feel it coming on, **kegel and hold it through the sneeze**. (Optional: squeeze your legs together for extra oomph!)

When urinating:

Do: Sit, breathe, relax your jaw

Don't: Hover, push, rush, practice kegels on the toilet (these all make it harder for our muscles to relax)

Water

- Aim for 64 oz
- Don't restrict water below this amount when you're experiencing leaking.

Bladder irritants = fluids that can increase urinary leaking and/or urgency. **Common irritants**: caffeine, carbonation, artificial sweeteners, juice and other acidic drinks, alcohol

Drinking water in combination with the beverages listed above can help decrease their influence on your bladder.