



# Bladder Training

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## What is bladder training?

Bladder training is teaching your bladder to regain control of urination. It uses a scheduled voiding (urination) plan where you don't give into the urge to urinate but rather learn how to suppress an urge. You go only at scheduled times, whether you feel you have to or not. The goal is to decrease frequency of urination, increase control over urgency, prolong intervals between urination and decrease the number of "accidents."

## How do I begin bladder training?

First, you will create a bladder diary. This written diary is a simple way to keep track of the time of urination, the amount of each urination and to record any accidents.

Next you will set intervals for urination that you feel comfortable with. This begins with looking at how frequently you urinate. For example, if you currently urinate every 90 minutes, the initial interval between urination should be 90 minutes. To start with, you will urinate every 90 minutes whether you have the urge or not. If you feel an urge to go in between your scheduled 90-minute interval, you will need to suppress the urge and not give in to your bladder. Based on this example, your schedule may look like this:

*Week One: Urinate when you wake up and before bedtime. Throughout the day, urinate at 90-minute intervals, suppressing any urges in between.*

*Week Two: Urinate when you wake up and before bedtime. Now increase your intervals by 15 minutes so you urinate every hour and 45 minutes. Continue to suppress any urges in between.*

You will continue to lengthen the interval between urination until you are urinating approximately every 3 hours. This is considered normal urination.

## What might help make my bladder training a success?

In order to be successful you should not urinate before the scheduled time. If you feel the urge to urinate before your scheduled time, try the following to control urges:

- Take slow deep breaths and concentrate on your breathing.
- Sit down, cross your legs and contract the pelvic floor muscles quickly and hard five or more times in a row.
- Try to distract yourself. For example, change positions, count backwards from 100 by 8 or recite a poem from memory.

Diet changes may also help. It is important to eliminate all sources that can cause urgency, especially caffeinated or carbonated beverages. Any stimuli, such as running water, which may enhance the urge to urinate, should also be avoided.

Therapy may take several weeks. Most studies show the success rate of bladder retraining is very good. Best of all, it is virtually free of side effects.