

# K+ Training

Some daily habits increase the risk of bladder leaks or make it harder to resolve leaking. See if you recognize any of these behaviors or patterns in your lifestyle, and gain crucial know-how for leak-free fitness.

---

## Habit 1 - When “just in case” becomes “all the time”

Did you know you can confuse your bladder and pelvic floor? Yup! Gaming your bladder urges is not a good idea. If you experience normal bladder urgency, then honor it and go to the bathroom. Regularly ignoring the urge to go eventually results in overstretching the bladder muscle, as well as excess demand on the pelvic floor muscles to tighten up and hold it in. Conversely, using the toilet frequently, when you don't actually have an urge, can eventually retrain your urges to happen earlier than they should. Both scenarios can result in risk of leaking due to reduced bladder capacity and confused pelvic floor muscles.

---

## Habit 2 - Avoiding fluids can make leaks worse

It's reasonable to think you should avoid drinking fluids if you fear leaking. However, dehydration makes urine more concentrated, which can irritate the bladder and make leaking worse (as well as urinary frequency and urgency). Dehydration can also lead to urinary tract infections and kidney stones. And since urine tends to smell worse when it's hyper-concentrated, discovery of leakage by others becomes more likely. Finally, dehydration impairs the body's ability to regulate temperature, creating health risks during exercise, physical activity, and being outdoors in the heat. So clearly it's important to stay hydrated. Use your urine color as a guide - it should be pale yellow. Evenly distribute your fluids throughout the day, rather than chugging periodically, as this will help manage urges and leaks. And you can also use soups and [water-rich foods](#) to help stay hydrated!

---

## Habit 3 - You *can* overdo it on the sparkling water

Caffeine, alcohol, soda and sparkling (carbonated) water are all bladder irritants. They are typically not a problem if consumed infrequently or in small quantities. But regular consumption, especially in large quantities, can result in increased bladder urgency, frequency, and leaking. If you are trying to stop leaks, then simply reducing or removing these types of beverages can make a big difference. You can also change *when* you consume these

beverages, taking care to avoid them prior to activities that can cause leaking, such as during exercise, playing with the kids, or laughing at a social event.

---

## Habit 4 - “Motion is lotion” for the bladder

Lack of physical activity can result in weakened muscles, including the pelvic floor. Physical weakness, especially combined with recent childbirth, injury, or surgery, makes it harder to regulate pressure in the abdomen; and regulating pressure is a normal function of the core muscles that keeps urine where it belongs. We highly recommend walking to increase daily mobility. In addition to daily walks, consider taking stairs instead of escalators, parking at the outer edge of the parking lot, and carrying groceries instead of using a cart. For personal advice on how to start strength-building, we recommend scheduling a few exercise sessions with a trainer at a local gym, or booking an evaluation with a pelvic health physical therapist.

---

## Habit 5 - Training without proper recovery

There's truth to the saying, “Train hard; recover harder.” Fitness enthusiasts regularly engage and challenge their muscles, including pelvic floor muscles as part of the body's core support system. However, this can lead to muscle tightness that causes leaking! Here's why: the pelvic floor is like a trampoline that needs to respond to body movement by contracting and relaxing. To do this well, the pelvic floor must be strong *and* mobile, able to contract well *and* relax well. If you exercise regularly, we encourage you to start thinking of yourself as an athlete. Recover as thoroughly and often as you train. Stretch or take a restorative yoga class to complement strenuous effort like running, weightlifting or dancing. Other recommended forms of recovery include meditation, [ice baths](#), massage, and [diaphragmatic breathing](#). For the pelvic floor, we recommend stretches like the Butterfly Stretch, Happy Baby Pose, and Figure Four Stretch, which are especially helpful.

---

## Habit 6 - Lift or bounce much?

People who frequently lift, whether for work or exercise or childcare, and people who frequently experience high impact, like running and jumping, are at risk for stress urinary incontinence if they do not get sufficient rest and pelvic floor conditioning. This is because the load of the weight and the impact of landing increase pressure on the bladder, in turn increasing the need

# K+ Training

for pelvic floor responsiveness and support as the “floor of the core”. Leaking may be a sign that the demands on the pelvic floor exceed its capacity to respond. To improve the pelvic floor’s ability to meet the frequent rest breaks or get assistance, or train to handle more.

---

## Habit 7 - Coughing a lot?

Sickness, allergies, and smoking can all cause chronic coughing that increases strain on the bladder and pelvic floor, resulting in leaks. Smoking, in particular, is proven to negatively impact the body in a variety of ways. It can contribute to urinary incontinence by irritating the bladder and aggravating inflammatory conditions like interstitial cystitis.

---

## Habit 8 - Your posture really does matter

Poor posture disadvantages the ability of the core muscles to control abdominal pressure and support the body well, especially if that posture is adopted for long periods of time or during workouts and strenuous tasks. Chronically poor posture can contribute to urinary incontinence by reducing the strength and length of core muscles (for example, slumping at a desk for many hours at a time) or by disadvantaging the pelvic pressure system (for example, carrying a baby with the low back over-arched).

---

## Habit 9 - You might be constipated

While constipation itself is not a “habit”, our habits can lead to constipation. Habits that cause constipation include:

- Routinely ignoring the urge for a bowel movement (waiting too long to go to the bathroom)
- Not drinking enough fluids (being dehydrated)
- Not eating enough fiber

Chronic constipation puts repetitive strain on pelvic floor muscles that can lead to stress urinary incontinence, or makes it worse. Addressing diet and lifestyle habits that cause constipation is also an important part of addressing pee leaks.

# K+ Training

---

## Lifestyle changes really work!

If you are convinced about habit change benefits, but also concerned about potential health implications, first consult a healthcare professional for proper diagnosis and treatment recommendations tailored to your unique needs.