



MOVEMENT  
PHYSIO & WELLNESS

# HACKS TO KEEP

*Your*

# PANTS DRY

& your bladder healthy

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Bladder leaks, also known as urinary incontinence, are a common concern addressed in pelvic floor physical therapy. Between 25% to 45% of women will experience some form of urinary incontinence at some point in their lives. These leaks can be attributed to various factors, including menopause, childbirth, dysfunction of the pelvic floor muscles, and even constipation. Although it's a prevalent issue, it's important to understand that experiencing bladder leaks is not considered normal, and seeking help from a pelvic floor therapist can be the key to putting an end to these embarrassing incidents.



It's a widespread misconception that bladder leaks are solely attributable to weak pelvic floor muscles. In reality, various factors can be responsible for these unwelcome incidents. One of the primary culprits is excessive tension in the pelvic floor muscles. Contrary to popular belief, a tight pelvic floor doesn't equate to a strong one. When these muscles are consistently held in a shortened position, they lose their ability to contract fully and respond promptly to prevent leaks.

## HERE ARE THE TOP 4 TIPS I GIVE TO PATIENTS WITH BLADDER LEAKS

Manage your  
stress

Breathe with  
movement

Improve hip and  
back mobility

Maintain healthy  
bladder habits

## 01 Stress Management

When you experience stress and anxiety, your body enters "fight or flight" mode. The sympathetic nervous system kicks into gear, releasing adrenaline, which can lead to the sudden urge to urinate. In today's fast-paced world, stress is a constant presence in our lives, often pushing our bodies into an elevated state. Additionally, research suggests that individuals dealing with anxiety and depression may be at a higher risk of urinary stress incontinence.

To address these concerns and promote a healthier pelvic floor, I typically recommend dedicating at least 5 minutes a day to stress management. The specific approach can vary from person to person, whether it involves taking a soothing bath, enjoying a warm cup of tea, or practicing techniques like breath-work and yoga. By actively engaging the "rest and digest" or parasympathetic system, we can help our pelvic floor muscles relax and improve their ability to contract and relax as needed, ultimately reducing the risk of leaks.

## 02 Breathe with Movement

Your diaphragm muscle and pelvic floor function as a team, and an imbalance between them can lead to issues. When there's excessive downward pressure on your bladder without adequate support from your pelvic floor during strenuous activities, it can result in leaks.

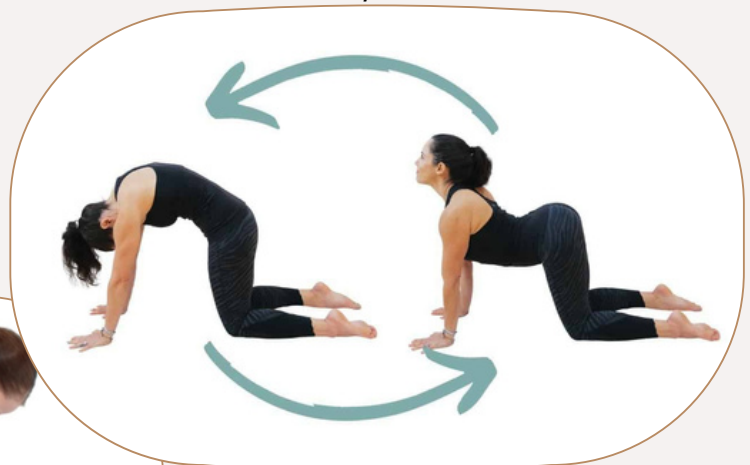
I often provide a simple tip to patients: when bending or lifting a heavy object, focus on exhaling during the strenuous part of the movement. This can help your diaphragm and pelvic floor to function together, give better support to your bladder, and prevent increased risk of prolapse or bladder leaks.

## 03 Improve Back and Hip Mobility

The muscles that connect to your pelvis can exert a significant influence on your pelvic floor. If you're encountering stiffness in your lower back or hips, it can disrupt the length and tension of your pelvic floor muscles.

For patients experiencing limited mobility that may affect their pelvic floor, I often recommend gentle exercises designed to enhance hip and low back flexibility. These exercises can include cat-cow stretches, adductor rocking, and hip 90/90 exercises. By incorporating these exercises into your daily routine, you can work towards improving the muscle balance in your pelvis and potentially reduce the risk of leaks.

Cat/Cow



Adductor Rocking



Hip 90/90



## 04 Maintain Healthy Bladder Habbits

Bladder habits are the daily behaviors you engage in that directly impact the health of your bladder. By adopting and maintaining healthy bladder habits, you can reduce the stress your bladder endures, leading to a decrease in unwanted leaks, discomfort during urination, and a decreased risk of future urinary issues.



Using a Squatty Potty or a stool to elevate your feet while using the bathroom can be a game-changer. This simple adjustment, with your knees positioned higher than your hips, can help elongate the muscles, making urination and bowel movements easier and more comfortable.



Bladder irritants consist of food and drinks that alter the pH of the bladder and make it more irritated. Irritants can cause increased frequency or urgency with urination. Common irritants include: alcohol, apples, carbonated beverages, chocolate, corn syrup, honey, milk, spicy foods, sugar & artificial sweeteners, tea, tomatoes, and vinegar. Reducing or eliminating these foods from your diet may decrease the irritability of your bladder.



In some cases, women experiencing bladder leaks may instinctively reduce their water and fluid intake. However, this can lead to increased bladder acidity and irritability. To maintain optimal bladder health, a useful guideline is to take your body weight, divide it in half, and aim to drink that many ounces of water per day. Increasing your bladder's fluid volume can help reduce irritability, potentially leading to less frequency, urgency, and fewer bladder leaks.

# Seeking Professional Assessment for Comprehensive Care



Bladder leakage can stem from a variety of factors, underscoring the importance of an assessment by a Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist to pinpoint the specific issues you need to address. By integrating these fundamental tips and lifestyle changes, you can promote overall bladder health and take the initial steps toward ending bladder leaks.



If you have any questions about these tips, give me a call  
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Hope this helps!

Take care,

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