



BLADDER TRAINING

Information about re-training your bladder from
The British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS)

You have been given this leaflet to provide you with information about re-training your overactive bladder (OAB). We have consulted specialist surgeons during its preparation, so it represents best practice in UK urology. You should use it in addition to any advice already given to you.



<http://rb.gy/exopm>

To view this leaflet online, scan the QR code (right) or type the short URL below it into your web browser:

What is bladder training?

Bladder training is the first-line treatment for urinary symptoms associated with an **overactive bladder (OAB)**. It is a way of teaching your bladder to hold more urine and helps to reduce the number of times you need to pass urine. It can also help you to stop urine leakage if you experience urgency (the sudden, uncontrollable need to pass urine).

If you have OAB, you may feel like your bladder contracts before you are ready to go to the toilet. This can happen if you get into the habit of going "just in case", because the bladder learns to hold only a small amount of urine.



How do I do bladder training?

The aim of bladder training is to teach you how to control your bladder, instead of your bladder controlling you. When you feel the urge to pass urine, do not immediately go. Instead, try to distract yourself for one minute (gradually increases this interval over time) from the time you get the first urge (using whatever method works best for you). If you can do this every time you get that sudden urge, you will find that this symptom begins to improve.

During the next week, do the same thing but try to delay passing urine for an **additional** five to 15 minutes. Your bladder will learn to hold even more, and your symptoms will gradually improve. It is helpful to keep a

diary (an [input/output chart](#)) of how much urine you are passing and how often you pass it while you are bladder training, because it can reflect your progress by showing fewer toilet visits with longer intervals between them.

A bladder training regime is often supervised by an appropriately-trained healthcare professional; they will provide support and answer any questions you may have. There are many different regimes, but they all involve suppressing the feelings of urinary urgency. Doing regular pelvic floor exercises together with the bladder training helps you identify and develop the muscles that prevent urinary leakage (and is especially helpful with urgency & mixed incontinence). If you are unsure how to perform these, ask your healthcare professional or have a look at the leaflets on our website for [women](#) or [men](#).

Please keep trying and remember that your bladder is like any other muscle in the body. It may require a few months' training to reach its full potential. You should do bladder training for a minimum of 6 weeks and you need to continue to practice the exercises regularly to maintain the benefit.

Is there anything else I can do?

Yes, there are several things that might help:

- lose weight (if you are overweight)
- avoid caffeinated drinks
- if you smoke, seek specialist advice to help you stop
- some people find that cutting down on fizzy drinks, and/or drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine, may reduce their symptoms;
- try not to drink too much - aim to drink between 1.5 and 2 litres of fluid a day;
- try not to get constipated;
- if leaking becomes a continuous problem, speak to your GP, nurse specialist or continence advisor; and
- if bladder training fails, ask your doctor if there are any drugs to help you.

What sources were used to prepare this leaflet?

This leaflet uses information from consensus panels and other evidence-based sources including:

- the [Department of Health \(England\)](#);
- the [Cochrane Collaboration](#); and
- the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#).

This leaflet also follows style guidelines from:

- the [Royal National Institute for Blind People \(RNIB\)](#);
- the [Information Standard](#);
- the [Patient Information Forum](#); and
- the [Plain English Campaign](#).

DISCLAIMER

Whilst we have made every effort to give accurate information, there may still be errors or omissions in this leaflet. BAUS cannot accept responsibility for any loss from action taken (or not taken) as a result of this information.

PLEASE NOTE: the staff at BAUS are not medically trained, and are unable to answer questions about the information provided in this leaflet. If you have any questions, you should contact your Urologist, Specialist Nurse or GP in the first instance.