

BLADDER RETRAINING DRILLS

Purpose: To gradually increase your bladder capacity and decrease the frequency of urination.

After an extended period of time of frequent urination the bladder “thermostat” is set at a very low volume. This “thermostat” needs to be reset to a higher volume. Concentrated urine is “irritating” to your bladder and makes you feel like you need to urinate at lower volumes than diluted urine. Certain dietary factors can also be irritating to the bladder and make you feel that you need to pass urine frequently. In order to encourage your bladder to hold larger volumes the urine going into your bladder should be as dilute and non-irritating as possible. When you first start drinking more water you may find the frequent urination seems worse until your bladder starts to gradually enlarge. The best way to monitor your progress is to keep a bladder diary one or two days per week. Keep track of how much urine you pass and how often you pass it. Gradually you will see the volumes of urine that you pass increase. We have forms available that can help you track this.

How to start:

- ❖ Eliminate bladder irritants such as:
 - Coffee (even decaffeinated)
 - Tea (but not herbal teas)
 - Carbonated beverages
 - Alcohol
 - Chocolate
 - Tomatoes
 - Acidic fruits and juices (such as cranberry, orange, grapefruit, lemon, and apple)
 - Spiced Foods
 - Sugar, Honey, Corn Syrup, Saccharine and NutraSweet
- ❖ Drink at least one (1) quart of water per day, then gradually increase to two (2) quarts of water per day, or the equivalent of eight glasses of water per day.
- ❖ When you get the urge to go, try to hold it for five extra minutes before going to the bathroom. Each week add five minutes to the length of time you hold the urine while you have the urgency to go.
- ❖ The goal is to hold 300-400 cc (10 to 13 oz.) in your bladder and urinate every two to four hours during the day. Once you have your bladder capacity at a larger volume you can gradually decrease your fluid intake to decrease the frequency of urination. Half of your fluid intake should always be water.
- ❖ You should see improvement within two to three months.

***To hold off voiding:** Please note that if you are doing **Kegel pelvic muscle exercises** they can help you with this project. When you have an episode of urinary urgency, performing a Kegel contraction can often help to hold off urinating and decrease the feeling of urgency. Also helpful:

- Sit down and cross legs
- Turn off running water
- Count backwards
- Change position
- Apply pressure to the perineum