

How Can Physical Therapy Help Me To Stop Wetting My Pants?

By Zoe Fackelman

Unexpected wetting of your pants has got to be on the top of the most embarrassing moments in life. However, there is help for you when you see a physical therapist specifically trained to treat women, men and children with urinary incontinence.

Urinary incontinence is the leakage of urine at unexpected times. The leakage occurs because the pelvic floor muscles are not strong enough to stop the flow of urine. For many, certain behaviors or habits may contribute toward incontinence.

Women have a tendency to leak urine due to a medical history of pregnancy, labor and delivery, changes in estrogen level or chronic low back, hip or pelvic region pain.

Many do not know where the

pelvic floor muscles are located on the body or how the pelvic floor muscles work. The pelvic floor muscles consist of a group of muscles that attach to the coccyx (tailbone), and the ilium, (pelvic bone). The muscles are in the "crotch" area. They form a bowl to support the internal organs and when strong help to prevent or reduce organ prolapse. The pelvic floor muscles allow us sexual appreciation (painless intercourse and orgasm) and they are the muscles that prevent us from leaking urine or feces. The low back, sacroiliac joint and hips depend upon the pelvic floor for stabilization.

There are four types of urinary incontinence.

1 — Stress urinary incontinence (SUI) is urinary leakage associated to exertion, activity or movement,

laughing, sneezing or coughing.

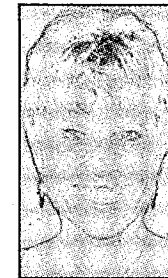
2 — Urge urinary incontinence (UUI) is urinary leakage associated to strong urges to urinate.

3 — Mixed urinary incontinence (MUI) is the term used when you have both stress and urge urinary incontinence.

4 — Functional urinary incontinence (FUI) is associated with urinary leakage when you cannot get to the restroom in time due to a physical limitation, dementia, confusion, delirium, environmental barriers or psychological problems such as depression or anger.

The rehabilitation program consists of behavioral modification/educations about habits, unbeknownst to you, that contribute toward your symptoms. Rehabilitation also includes

biofeedback and instruction of proper technique of pelvic floor and hip muscle exercises. Some may require techniques such as pain reflex release techniques to resolve nerve and muscle tension issues to accomplish dryness. A good program is one that teaches you how to take care of yourself.



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