



Always by your side

# Learn more about Leaks

Bladder Weakness, Leaks  
and Stress Incontinence

Written in collaboration with  
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leading pelvic health specialists.  
MCSP MSt (Cantab)







"If you leak, your pelvic floor is telling you it needs attention. It is your body's early warning sign that all is not well - *DON'T IGNORE IT!*"

## Hello & welcome

Bladder Weakness, Light Bladder Weakness, Light Adult Incontinence; however we dress it up, it all adds up to the same thing... you leak urine when you don't want to.

A staggering 1 in 3 women in the UK suffer with bladder leaks and many are developing it at an earlier age. Here at Kegel8®, we are all too familiar with the impact it has on both physical and emotional well-being, as well as on life in general.

Research has shown us that most women can massively improve the strength, tone and skills of their pelvic floor muscles by simply doing regular classic pelvic floor exercises.

Indeed, regular pelvic floor exercise, much like any other type of exercise, will strengthen the muscles over time, enabling them to perform their role much more effectively and offer the right amount of support to the bladder to ensure there are no leakages.

In addition, it can calm 'overactive' nerves for those experiencing 'jumpy' or 'irritable' sensations in their bladder. That means you can get back to doing all the things you love!

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1 in 10 women with bladder leaks will develop bowel leaks too.



## Types of Incontinence

### Stress Incontinence

Stress incontinence is leakage that occurs when the bladder is under pressure or high impact, such as when you cough, sneeze, laugh or jump. This can be a common problem after surgery or if pelvic muscles have weakened due to ageing, during pregnancy or childbirth, or from frequent stretch and straining from a chronic cough or constipation.

### Urge Incontinence

Urge incontinence is the loss of urine associated with sudden and strong impulse to urinate that cannot be delayed. Most people can hold on, however, if you are suffering from urge incontinence, the bladder may feel fuller than it is. Sometimes, the bladder contracts early when it's not very full. This can make you suddenly need the toilet and leak urine before you get there.

### Nocturia

If you suffer from urge incontinence, you may also find that you have the need to frequently pass urine during the night and wake to do so – this is a condition called nocturia.

Nocturia is not always related to an underlying condition. It may be caused by pregnancy, ageing, fluid intake just before bedtime and the consumption of alcohol and caffeinated beverages.





Four things you need to do now to exercise your pelvic floor



# 1. Find your pelvic floor

Research has shown us that most women can massively improve the strength, tone and skills of their pelvic floor muscles by simply doing pelvic floor exercises (also known as Kegels).

A strong healthy pelvic floor supports your pelvic organs to prevent prolapse, helps closure of the bladder tube to prevent leaks, and helps you control bladder urges. The pelvic floor muscles also have to release to fully empty the bladder and bowel. You need to be able to both contract and relax the muscles for comfortable sex and sexual pleasure.

## Kegels

A Kegel is basically a pelvic floor contraction, achieved by squeezing and lifting the pelvic floor muscles.

Try this; tighten the muscles around your anus and vagina and lift them upwards towards your navel. Imagine you are trying to stop wind or hold in the contents of your bladder. Can you do it?

If you find yourself squeezing your legs together, or tensing your buttocks, this is a sign you haven't located the correct muscles, and may need some assistance - see page 10. If you are confident that you've performed a Kegel, then you can start to do them regularly to improve your muscle strength, co-ordination and ability to relax too.

## Pilates & yoga

Pilates and yoga are both excellent for the pelvic floor. Not sure where to start? See our pelvic floor exercise playlist on YouTube.



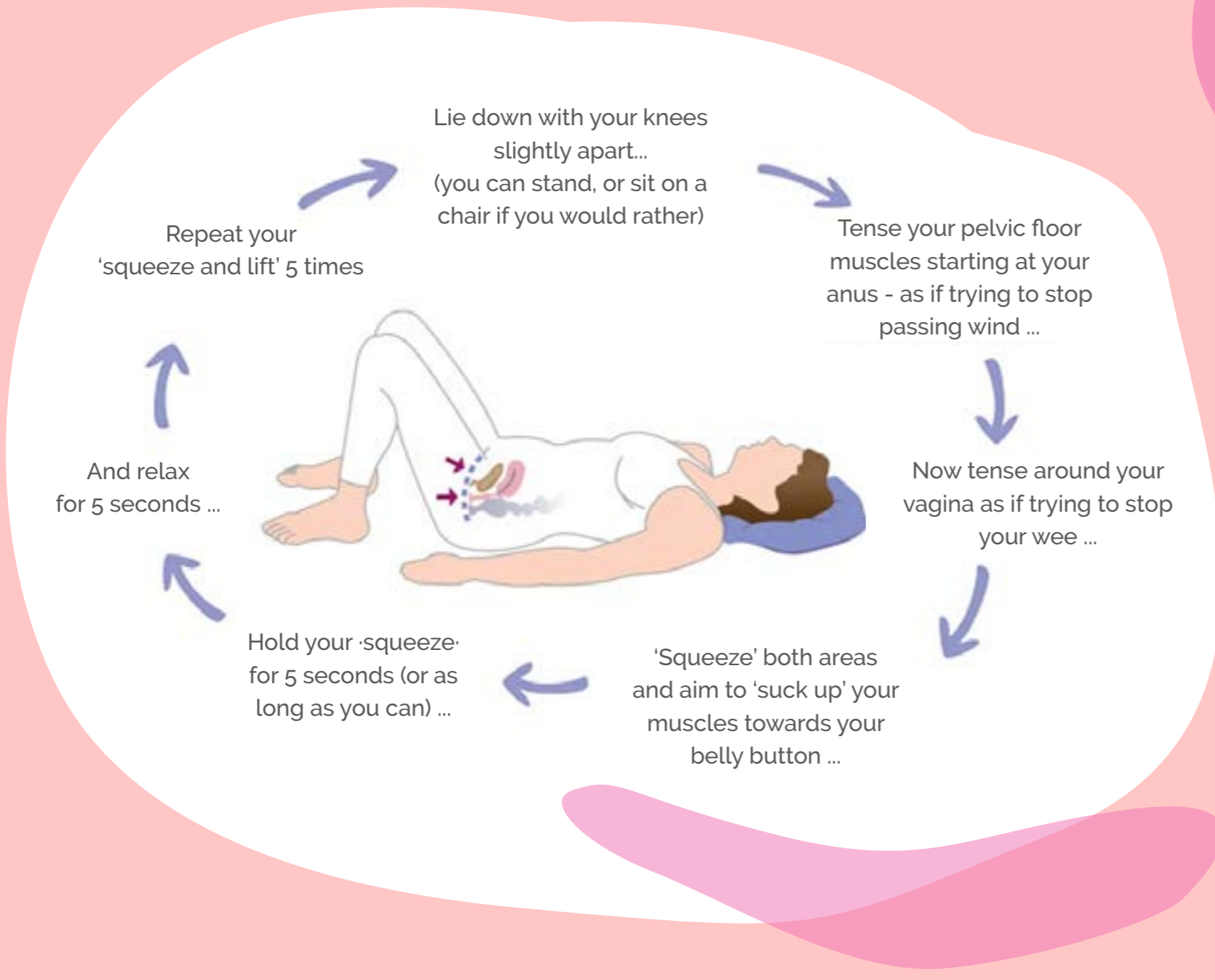
Kegel8®  
Pelvic Floor Exercise  
Techniques



It's estimated that around half of women are unable to locate and work their pelvic floor muscles.

## 2. Practise holding your contractions

This is a classic first position to start practising. **Please note** you don't have to do this lying down, pelvic floor exercises can be done in any position. It is also important you relax between squeezing and lifting.



### 3. Make it a routine

Try using the **10 - 10 - 3** method as way of incorporating pelvic floor exercise into your daily routine.

**1. Perform a 10 second slow Kegel:**

squeeze and lift the muscles around your anus and vagina. Repeat up to 10 times.

**2. Perform 10 fast Kegels:**

Squeeze and lift quickly for 2 seconds and then fully relax. The relaxation part is important!

**3. Repeat 3 times a day.**

Repetition and persistence are key!



### 4. The Knack

Need a quick win with improving bladder leakage? The Knack is the magical art of drawing up your pelvic floor muscles **just before** you cough, sneeze, laugh or pick up something heavy. It is during these times that your pelvic floor muscles are put under sudden pressure and are forced to quickly react to save you from embarrassment. Research has confirmed it works to stop urine leakage.

Watch Physiotherapist, Amanda Savage, speak to Kegel8 Founder and Managing Director, **Stephanie Taylor**, explaining The Knack technique.



Kegel8®  
Have You Got  
The Knack?





## Next steps

At this stage, if you've tried pelvic floor exercises but seen little to no results, we have a few devices that can help you along the way.





## Try Resistance

If basic pelvic floor exercise is either not working or not challenging enough for you, we recommend trying Kegel weights. Much like with regular workouts, using weights helps to improve strength and measure progress. It might also be especially helpful if you're struggling with bladder issues. Clinical trials show that weighted vaginal exercise has more than a **70% success rate** at improving stress incontinence, when performed over a 12 week period.



## Use a pelvic floor toner.

### Kegel8® Ultra 20

If you are struggling to locate your pelvic floor and exercise it independently, we recommend the Ultra 20 Electronic Pelvic Toner. This uses Neuromuscular Electronic Stimulation (NMES), painless electronic currents to exercise your pelvic floor. You can either use a probe, which is inserted a few centimetres internally and delivers the NMES directly to the pelvic floor muscles, or electrode pads on your skin to stimulate the nerves that are connected to your pelvic floor muscles.

It accurately locates your pelvic floor muscles and exercises them for you. The **“smile”** feature shows you in real time when your pelvic floor muscles are in work and rest mode.

Use the Ultra 20 to get your pelvic floor into shape, and then to maintain good pelvic floor strength and support for your pelvic organs,

Most women notice results with the Ultra 20 after only 4 weeks

★★★★★ Trustpilot

“I noticed the difference much quicker than I expected. I have never worn my ring (pessary) again ever since, despite resuming some other activities like exercising. My symptoms were no longer there.”

– verified buyer



1

Week 1

With 45 minute sessions, your toner will help you find your pelvic floor muscles.

4

Week 4

You'll start to feel a real difference. More control, less leaks, more confidence.

12

Week 12

Your pelvic floor is strong and you're living life without leaks and sudden urges!



## Wear support garments

Compression underwear gently activates the pelvic floor muscles which support the bladder .

### Will support garments work for me?

Try wearing your most supportive pair of knickers, and your most supportive (and comfortable) pair of jeans or leggings the next time you're out and about. If you notice an improvement in your symptoms by the end of the day, then support garments are ideal for you. They provide tailored support and compression with utmost comfort and wearability.



Support garments can help prevent developing a prolapse



★★★★★ Trustpilot

"These are so comfortable, I can't believe the difference after a few weeks... The support is on the perineum area and it helps to alleviate the dragging feeling of the prolapse." – verified buyer

### SRC Support Shorts

Expertly tailored to treat those with stage 1 uterine or bladder prolapse, this compression underwear may also prevent those suffering with Stress Urinary Incontinence from developing pelvic organ prolapse in the future.

SRC Shorts fully stabilise the pelvis with

- Patented anatomical support panels
- A triple layer gusset panel to apply even compression to the entire perineal area
- An abdominal panel to support the area from the umbilicus to the pubic bone.

## How to know if you are squeezing correctly

If you don't need to use electronic stimulation and you can already contract your pelvic floor muscles correctly, the next step is to practise doing your exercises independently, which nurtures the mind-muscle connection further. But you need to do them regularly & effectively.

### Biofeedback Trainer

Our Kegel8® Biofeedback trainer can be helpful for you to check that you are doing your exercises correctly, especially if you need to focus on relaxing fully between contractions.

Just like with any bit of gym kit, it is fun to have tasks to do and targets to reach. If you tend to get distracted when exercising, using a device that makes you concentrate can be motivating and help get them done.

### How does it work?

The Kegel8 Biofeedback device shows you what you are doing with your muscles when you contract them independently. The soft, air-filled vaginal probe connects to the small handheld monitor. With each Kegel, you squeeze the probe and the monitor displays the strength of your squeeze on a scale of 1 to 6.



## How do I know if my pelvic floor is too tight or too loose?

Pelvic floor muscles can be too tight from over exercising or them or because you are a 'gripper'. This is a common issue with athletes.

If these muscles are always tight this can lead to problems with leakage as muscles can fatigue, they can cause pain when passing urine or the bladder may not empty properly.

You can experience pain in the vagina, back passage or even pain when you have sex. It is key to not tighten up as you need to let go and this can be a difficult exercise to do.

For more information, watch this video with our expert **Amanda Savage**.



Kegel8  
Can the Pelvic Floor  
Be Too Tight?

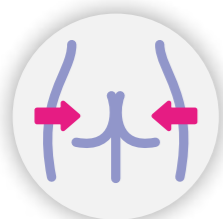


## Struggling to squeeze?

Research has shown us that most women can massively improve the strength, tone and skills of their pelvic floor muscles by simply doing regular classic pelvic floor exercises. However, do check that you are doing them correctly & the most up to date way.

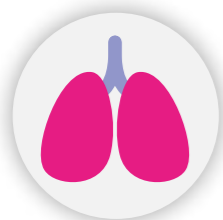
### Did you know?

**50%** of women don't know how to produce an effective pelvic floor contraction. These are the common mistakes...



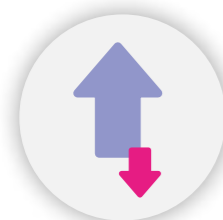
#### Squeezing your buttocks

It's important to isolate the pelvic floor and not tense other muscles like your glutes or abs.



#### Remember to breathe...

Always focus on your breathing when Kegeling. You should be able to breathe normally; don't strain or hold your breath!



#### Lift, don't push

This one is very important: you must squeeze and lift! Pushing down on the muscles is counter-productive as it puts undue pressure on the pelvic floor.



#### Don't give up!

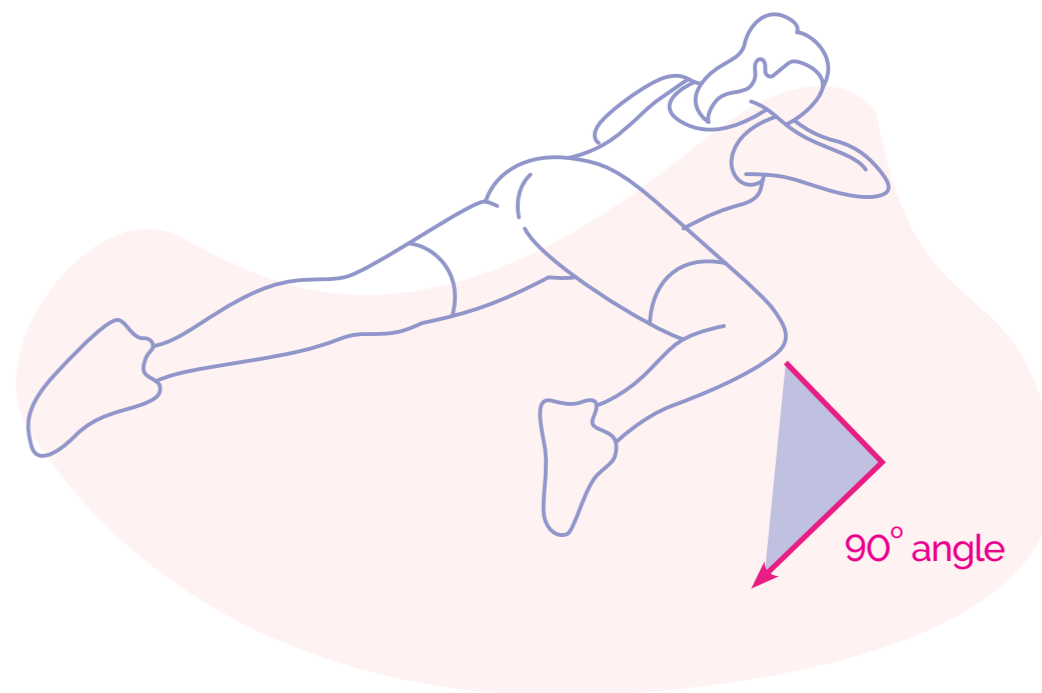
It takes persistence, practise, and patience to see results but it will be worth it. Make them a part of your daily routine and you'll see results before too long.

### Try this position

Here's another great position to hold while you do your pelvic floor exercises. Lying like this will help isolate the pelvic floor muscles and prevent you from squeezing your buttocks or tensing your abdominal muscles;

Lie on your stomach, resting your head on your hands with your legs out straight. Then bring one leg out to the side, bending your knee to a 90 degree angle. Simple!

With this pose you should really feel the focus on your pelvic floor muscles.



90° angle

## Mastered the squeeze?

There are two types of pelvic floor exercises (or Kegels); Slow Kegels - holding your 'squeeze and lift' for at least 5 seconds, and Fast Kegels - with these you hold your 'squeeze and lift' for just 2 seconds and relax for just 2 seconds!

Exercising in this way specifically targets the fast twitch muscle fibres in your pelvic floor - these are the fibres responsible for fast reaction to control urine when you cough, laugh, sneeze, jump and run. With such quick contractions these exercises can be tough but they are essential to a healthy pelvic floor; so here's a great way to help get the motivation and rhythm you need:

### Aerobic Pelvic Floor Routine:

1. Position yourself in front of a step - this can be an aerobics step, or just the bottom step of your stairs in your home.
2. Step up onto the step, one foot after the other as you would in an aerobics class, squeezing and lifting your pelvic floor muscles as you do so.
3. As both feet land on the step, step back down and release your squeeze and lift, relaxing your pelvic floor muscles as both feet return to the floor.
4. And repeat 10 times. The great thing about this exercise is you can actually do it in the gym or even a step class and no one will even know.

*Some useful video links if you need to build up to the step exercises...*



Abdominal exercises for a stronger pelvic floor



Using arm weights to strengthen your pelvic floor

With such quick movements it can help to chant as you exercise: **squeeze 1, 2** as you step up; **and relax 1, 2** as you step down.





## Lifestyle changes can help a bladder leakage problem

### Improve toilet habits

Constipation is a leading cause of incontinence. Straining on the loo stretches and weakens your pelvic floor muscles. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle, which can be broken by improving your diet and your toilet habits.

### Drink more water

Your body needs water or other fluids to work properly and to avoid dehydration. That's why it's important to drink enough fluids. In climates such as the UK's, we should drink about 1.2 litres (six to eight glasses) of fluid every day to stop us getting dehydrated. In hotter climates, the body needs more than this. We also get some fluid from the food we eat.



### Increase fibre intake

Eating more fibre will make your stools easier to pass. Try slowly adding more fruit, vegetables, and nuts to your diet as well as wholegrains such as oats and brown rice.

### Elevate your knees when you poo

Humans are designed to 'go' in a squatting position, so that the bowels can empty properly. When you sit on a standard toilet your colon is kept partially closed by a muscle called the puborectalis. Try a toilet stool such as the Go Better toilet stool to achieve the squatting position on the toilet.

Want to try before you buy? Try propping your feet up on a stack of old books (7"-8" high is optimal) next time nature calls. If you find that this squatting position makes it easier to go, you can invest in a nice, specially designed, wipe-clean Go Better toilet stool with confidence.



### Lose Weight

If you become overweight, more stress is placed on your pelvic floor muscles. This continual, heavy load can weaken the muscles and you are more likely to suffer from incontinence as a result. Studies have shown that reducing your weight by 10% can reduce your incontinence by half!

### Reduce Intake of Certain Drinks

YouCaffeine, alcohol and fizzy drinks are bladder irritants and can make overactive bladder symptoms even worse. Do not avoid drinking water as this is key to keeping your body hydrated.



### Keep fit and eat well

Usually, part of the solution to all issues is keeping moving and eating a healthy diet as this helps your body to function more efficiently. If you need help getting all the nutrients your body needs you can find our range of supplements above, including collagen, Vitamin D3 and magnesium supplements.





## Tips for Managing Urgency Incontinence in the Short Term

When you feel the urge, how do you stop it? Or how can you make the urges less frequent? Don't worry, there are a variety of practical methods of prevention available to help fight back against urge incontinence. Here are Kegel8®'s top tips:

**1. Kegel!** Pelvic floor exercises are essential, and the first-line treatment for tackling incontinence. Exercising your pelvic floor muscles can strengthen the pelvic floor and reduce your risk of incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse. You can't hang on if you have nothing to hang on with

**2. Tiptoe** When you have the urge to go, try standing on your tiptoes. Going up and down on tip toes works the calf muscles which share the same nerve endings with the pelvic floor helping it to work better.

**3. Distract yourself** Try to focus your attention on something other than your bladder. Yes, it's easier said than done, but it could help to reduce the urgency.

**4. Toughen up** Applying pressure to the perineum helps to defer the urge to wee because it stimulates the nerves of the skin helping to make the pelvic floor work. If you can't be too obvious then sitting on the edge of a chair or rolled up jumper can be more subtle.

Kegel8 Ultra20 neuromodulation calms the nerves that make the bladder irritable. This stimulation programme can be applied close to the bladder via a vaginal probe or indirectly by using skin electrodes at the ankle.



[Shop TENS electrodes >](#)

## Kegel8 bespoke programmes

Bladder leaks can be improved by practising pelvic floor muscle exercises. The Kegel8 Ultra 20 has **20 electrical stimulation programmes** to improve pelvic floor muscle strength, co-ordination and relaxation as well as to directly calm the bladder nerves.

**Amanda Savage**, pelvic health physiotherapist, has devised a series of step by step 12 week guided pathways (using a carefully chosen mix of these programmes) for 9 common conditions. Our **Let's Get Started Guide** includes pathways for:

1. More effective pelvic floor exercises
2. Bladder weakness and stress incontinence
3. Uncontrollable gas/wind and bowel control
4. Menopause, perimenopause and post menopause
5. Pelvic organ prolapse
6. Pelvic pain
7. Postpartum recovery
8. Vaginal looseness and lack of sensation
9. Rehabilitation after gynaecological surgery

★★★★★ Trustpilot

*Much easier and more pleasant to use than I imagined!*

- verified buyer

"Wow - this is much less of a pain and faff to use than I thought it might be; it's actually super-easy, it's very quick to find the sections you need in the guide, run the preliminary programmes, and start working on your pelvic floor. I'm only two weeks in, and already finding an improvement to my urge/stress incontinence - I only wish I'd ordered much earlier. It's also not at all an unpleasant sensation - and best of all, apart from the fact it actually works, of course, is that it's also teaching me about how to tighten my own pelvic floor muscles at other times (turns out I've spent all these years not quite getting it right, despite investing in all sorts of other gadgets). Buy one today - you really won't regret it."





*We hope you've enjoyed this eBook*

Further reading at [Kegel8.co.uk](http://Kegel8.co.uk)

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