



## 2. Bladder Weakness and 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. Exercising with a STIM device makes the pelvic floor muscles contract and release to encourage them to grow and have a better blood and nerve supply. Follow our guided 12-week programme using the internal probe to directly activate the pelvic floor muscles or if you prefer, indirectly using skin electrodes (place on the sacrum, see placement on page 16).

Urge urinary incontinence is the urgent and frequent need to urinate or experience leakage before you can make it to the toilet. You will also benefit from our 12-week pathway of stimulation to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.

If your bladder feels predominantly “jumpy” or “irritable”, you can also use your stimulation machine to “calm” the nerves to the bladder. The pathway will guide you to introduce this at week 4 once you have established your muscle training routine. Or, if this is your primary concern, you can skip to page 47 for guidance on how to apply a neuromodulation programme with skin electrodes at the ankle (TTNS).

## Benefits of Using a Stimulation Machine

- Sensations created by the electrical impulses help your brain to correctly identify the location of your pelvic floor muscles.
- You can practise contracting your muscles along with the machine to prepare for “real life” scenarios where you can’t access your device.
- The machine can help you to “hold” a muscle contraction while you concentrate on learning to breathe and move at the same time.
- You can use the skills you learn when working with the machine to improve your pelvic floor practise when exercising without the machine.

## Preparation

**IMPORTANT:** Before proceeding with this condition exercise, make certain to run built-in programmes P01 and P02. These are sensitivity tests to help you determine if it's safe for you to move forward with the following exercise. (see page 19 - 20).

Prog. No.	Screen Codes	Programme Name	Time (mins)	Page
P01	RCV1	Sensation Test 1	30	19
P02	RCV2	Sensation Test 2	60	20

If during the test you notice a problem with sensation, do not proceed. Instead, arrange a visit with your doctor or physiotherapist. If no problem, proceed to week 1.

- If you're worried that there is a problem with sensation, arrange an appointment with your GP or a specialist physiotherapist.

**TIP:** For the first week of your routine, increase the mA until you feel a slight tingling sensation. After this, increase your mA's 1-2 levels every 1-2 weeks. If it becomes uncomfortable, lower it again.

# First Month ①②③④

## Goal: “Find and Feel” your pelvic floor muscles

### ①②③④ Week 1: Use P03

P03 features long recovery rests between muscle contractions

Phase 1: 15 minutes low frequency.

Phase 2: 30 minutes higher frequency.

- Allow the sensations to come and go in cycles of stimulation and rest periods. Aim to learn where your pelvic floor muscles are.
- Use only alternate days as you get used to the probe.

### ①②③④ Week 2: Use P03

If week 1 has been comfortable, use your stimulation device daily for 6 days, then have a rest day.

- Take an extra “rest” day if at all uncomfortable or experiencing any type of irritation. If your internal tissues are tender or easily irritated, continue an alternate day pattern.

1 2 3 4 **Week 3 - 4: Use P04**

Features longer muscle contraction times (8 with a similar long rest time in each cycle. Four phases to change between stimulation frequencies more often.

- Now help your brain to copy the machine work by intermittently “joining in” with some of the stimulation cycles.
- Try to work your pelvic floor muscles with your mind, drawing in and up when you feel the stimulation. Don't worry if you can only join in for a few, let the machine do the rest of the work.



### Check in

If Urgency, frequency or urge incontinence are persisting at week 4 add a neuromodulation programme for alternating sessions using P09.

If you're happy using the internal probe, P09 can be applied directly to the pelvic area. OR an alternative method of application using external skin electrodes at the ankle (TTNS) can be used, steps on how to do this can be found on page 47.

## Second Month 1 2 3 4

### Goal: Improve your muscle (& brain!) skills

#### 1 2 3 4 Week 1 - 4: Use P10

It's time to work yourself a little harder in phase 2 by joining in with the machine more and having shorter rests between contractions.

Phase 1: First enjoy 10 minutes of continuous low-frequency current improves awareness of the muscle position, blood flow, nerve sensitivity. Relax in this phase.

Phase 2: 30 minutes of medium frequency current to stimulate the fast and slow pelvic floor muscle fibres by contracting for 5 seconds then relaxing for 5 seconds in cycles.

- Join in with some of these contractions, trying to contract for the full 5 seconds.
- Join in for 1 minute, then let the machine do the work for 1 minute or count joining in for 6 cycles, then letting the machine do 6 cycles.
- Use 6 days out of 7 (or alternate days if your internal tissues are sensitive)

## Third month 1 2 3 4

### Goal: Develop more pelvic floor skills

#### 1 2 3 4 Week 1 - 4: Use P11

This month join in with some of the contractions in both phases.

Phase 1: Focus on the back area of the pelvic floor (as if stopping wind). Practise this for 10 minutes.

Phase 2: 30 minutes - When you join in try to use ALL of the muscle, the back area, the front around the bladder tube and even the side walls!



#### Check in

If urgency, frequency or urge incontinence persist continue using P09 for alternating sessions. Steps for using P09 can be found on page 47.

## Symptom review

### Maintenance or seek more help?

How are you getting on? Compare how you feel now to how you felt in Week 1. Are some problems and worries gone?

Do you need to focus another month on strength exercises or more time with the programme that calms the bladder?

Not making the progress you hoped? Reach out to one of our advisors by visiting our website:

[www.kegel8.co.uk/contactus](http://www.kegel8.co.uk/contactus)

Doing well - fantastic - move on to the Maintenance programme!

## Maintenance

### Maintain your results!

Use P05: Weekly maintenance.

A mix of frequencies to maintain fast and slow twitch muscle fibres.

Remember to join in with some of the contractions to keep your brain well connected to the pelvic floor muscle work!



# TTNS Alternative

## Treatment using only external ankle pads

Transcutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation is the specific application of the pre-set neuromodulation programme (P09) using two electrode pads placed at the ankle. The posterior tibial nerve shares a common pathway with the bladder muscle and therefore is an effective treatment for calming a sensitive or overactive bladder.

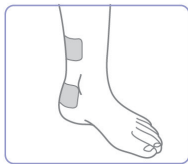
P09 is a short 20-minute nerve-calming neuromodulation programme for sensitive nerves. A low frequency current has a soothing effect on the bladder nerves.

You will feel the current in cycles of 10 seconds with 5 second rests. Use daily, progressing to twice a day after the first 6 weeks if comfortable, allowing at least 8 hours between treatment sessions. It is recommended to use TTNS for 12 weeks to see improvement in symptoms.

## Steps

**Empty your bladder before you start using the equipment.**

Attach a lead wire to a pair of electrode pads and insert the other end of the lead wire into Channel A on the top left of your device.



Place on the skin - Position one behind the bone on the inside ankle and the other above this at least 3 fingers width apart.

Use Channel A controls to change the intensity of the current through the pads.

- Starting from 0, increase the mA until you feel a slight tingling sensation, you should not feel any discomfort. If you feel discomfort or your big toe twitch, the mA is too high and should be lowered.
- You do not need to feel the muscles of the foot, leg, pelvis or pelvic floor contracting for this programme to be effective.
- Allow the sensations to come and go, relax throughout the programme.
- You can change which ankle you attach the electrodes to each treatment session, especially if you have sensitive or fragile skin.

**NOTE:** Please do not use this electrode placement or instructions for any other programme.