

A woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a light green tank top, is smiling and looking upwards while holding a metal barbell. She is in a gym setting with various exercise machines visible in the background.

Exercise for Catheter Users

Learn why exercise
is good for you

Leanne*
User | Continence Care

Exercise – makes life better

Learn why exercise is good for you –
especially if you have bladder problems.

The need to use intermittent catheterization does not mean that you can't lead an active lifestyle. Being active in any way can make you feel better and help your body get stronger. It can also be fun and give you a chance to socialize with other people. When you have a medical condition, the lack of physical activity can have a negative impact on your overall body function.

Some physical activities may increase the urge to empty your bladder or even to leak some urine. Instead of avoiding the activity, use a pad or empty your bladder just before. The fear of increased bladder issues should not hold you back from exercising.

These are general guidelines meant to help you with typical questions. You should follow the specific instructions provided by your doctor or nurse and catheter you are using.



► What sport activities are suitable for you?

The bouncing and pounding movement of running might cause leakage.

Instead: Try power-walking (fast walking).

Heavy lifting (using hand weights or other lifting equipment) can put too much pressure on your bladder.

Instead: Switch to lighter weights instead and exceed the number of lifts or experiment with doing them slower or faster.

Tip: Swimming is ideal because it can be done by most people regardless of how fit or mobile they are.

► If you are in a wheelchair

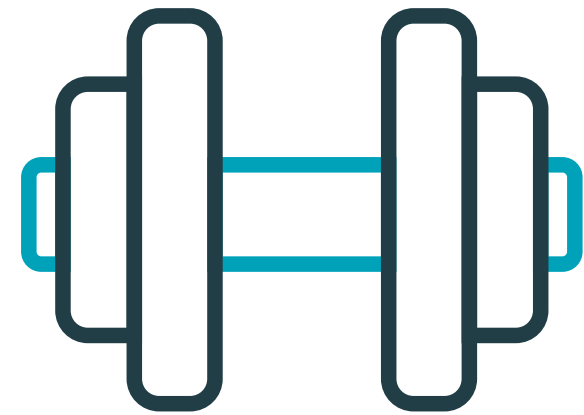
There are also plenty of sport activities that can be done sitting in a wheelchair, including competitive sport. Online research can help you find one of the many organizations that specialize in sport for wheelchair users. For example, there are a number of wheelchair basketball and rugby groups as well as other dance and movement classes and groups that are specific to those who use wheelchairs.

Everything counts

Besides scheduled exercise, see if you can find a way to be physically active every day. Here are some ideas for simple, at-home activities that can be incorporated into daily tasks:

- strengthen your arms using some bottles from the fridge while cooking,
- you can do pelvic floor exercises while watching TV,
- gardening or playing with the kids.

How you're able to sneak in exercise during the day is of course dependent on your situation and medical condition.



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3 tips for making exercise a success

Ready, set, go! Here are some tips to make it easier to be active:

1) Remember to drink

Bladder issues and the insecurity of not being at home might persuade you to drink less. But if you sweat more or the weather is hot, you will need to drink even more to replace lost fluids. Take small sips and plan your catheterisations. Avoid dehydration.

2) Stick to your schedule

It's easy to get carried away when you're involved in sport activities – especially when you're almost about to win or in good company! Set yourself a reminder so you don't forget to catheterize. Think about where you'll be doing your activity and plan when you can visit the toilet so it doesn't get in the way.

3) Catheterise before the activity

Whatever you decide to do, catheterize right before you start, as this will minimize the risk of leakages.

Bladder training exercises

Everyone can benefit from pelvic floor exercises!

Some people that experience bladder conditions may benefit from pelvic floor training. Pelvic floor exercises – also called kegels – can improve bladder management. If your doctor or nurse think that it could be helpful to you, you can do these exercises on a regular basis and you just might feel the difference.

► Here's how to get going:

1 Isolate your pelvic floor muscles

Imagine stopping yourself from passing wind, pull in from the back passage upwards and forwards. Do not let the chest lift, do not hold your breath or tighten your stomach muscles.

2 Squeeeeeeeze

Squeeze and draw in the muscles around the urethra and anus. You should have a sense of »lift« when squeezing. You should hold them strong and tight as you count to 8 after which you should let go.

3 Relax

Relax for 8 seconds. At this point you should have a distinct feeling of letting go.

This schedule should be repeated between 8-12 times per day.

If you initially cannot hold the pelvic floor for 8 seconds you should hold as long as you can. Note that training your pelvic floor muscle is a matter of how long you can hold and squeeze rather than the number repetitions.

► Remember to do them

It's important to get into a daily routine. The easiest way to accomplish this is to link it to something that you do on a daily basis. Remember, training the pelvic floor doesn't take up a lot of time!

You can do them:

- Laying in bed before you sleep
- After meals
- Before or after undressing yourself in the evening
- Sitting in your car on your way to or from work
- When you're waiting in line
- When traveling – on the plane or train, at the airport, at your hotel

It's not important where you do it – but that you get to do it on a daily basis. Experiment and find the everyday situation that fits you the best.

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Finding Joy in Sport as a Wheelchair User

Leanne Taylor

Leanne received compensation from Coloplast to provide this information. Each person's situation is unique so your experience may not be the same.

Meet Leanne: an elite Canadian paratriathlete currently living in Winnipeg. She competes for Team Canada on a global level in paratriathlon. Learn more about Leanne's story and how finding parasport after injury changed her life for the better.

► Confidence through sport

Leanne was always an active person and loved sport. Then, she was in a bike accident in 2018. Paralyzed from the waist down, Leanne was looking for something to feel active and healthy again and came across paratriathlon. This is a sport in which athletes swim, handcycle, and utilize racing wheelchairs to compete. Through paratriathlon, Leanne built confidence as a newly paraplegic person, which helped her return to work and establish a life that she is proud of.

"I refused to allow my disability to be the end of my happiness, so I set about finding ways to find joy in my life as a wheelchair user."

► The importance of role models

When Leanne was injured, she realized how many people who use wheelchairs don't have role models who look like them. Until she got involved in parasport, she had never seen an athlete who was a wheelchair user. She did not have models who looked like her, so now, she feels it is important to share her story of being an athlete so other people who use wheelchairs can see that a life with sport is possible.

"I met doctors, mothers, project managers, and so many others who were living productive lives as wheelchair users. This allowed me to see, and really believe, that anything was possible for me."





► Finding the right products

For Leanne, having products that she's comfortable using in any environment lets her feel confident leaving her home and living her life. She can drink as much water as she needs as an athlete, knowing that she can catheterize anywhere she goes. Her community of paratriathletes who taught her how to use a racing wheelchair, also introduced her to SpeediCath® catheters – products her peers were using to be able to get on with training more comfortably.

“Having catheters that I’m comfortable and confident using in any environment makes me feel like I no longer have to structure my life around going to the bathroom.”

► SpeediCath® is right for Leanne

Leanne tried other catheters, but they were either bulky to carry around or just weren't adaptable to different kinds of environments, like training locations. As an athlete, she travels a lot, and so SpeediCath® compact catheters are the right choice for her as they are small and convenient to take on-the-go. They also come pre-lubricated, so she does not have to worry about bringing extra supplies, or the mess that comes with non-lubricated catheters.

“You always hope there’s going to be an accessible washroom to use at different training locations. But even if there isn’t, SpeediCath Compact catheters give me the freedom to catheterize anywhere I go.”

[Click here to read more about Leanne’s story!](#)

[Click here to learn more about SpeediCath® Compact catheters](#)

Information and help

Coloplast® Care

You can get help from a Coloplast Care Advisor!
We are available from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (EST) at:

1-866-293-6349

www.coloplastcare.ca

This booklet is produced by Coloplast Canada

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