
LAUGH WITHOUT FEAR
The 21-Day Postpartum Pelvic Floor Reset
NNENNA U.
LAUGH
WITHOUT FEAR
The 21-Day Postpartum
Pelvic Floor Reset
WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:
Understand Your Body
Know what's happening and why
Simple Daily Exercises
The L.A.U.G.H. Method™ in just 10 minutes a day
Real-Life Strategies
For church, weddings, traffic & travel
Your Postpartum Kit
Be prepared, be confident
Feel Like You Again
Laugh, move, live freely
HEALTH
CONFIDENCE
FREEDOM
Stronger Healthier Happier You
by NNENNA U.

LAUGH WITHOUT FEAR

The 21-Day Postpartum Pelvic Floor Reset

by Nnenna U.

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Introduction

Come and Sit Down, My Sister

Come and sit down. Let me get you a drink.

I want to talk to you the way I talk to my own sister. No big grammar. No fear. Just us.

I have three children. Anybody who has carried a baby and raised one knows that nobody gives you the full story. They tell you about the sleepless nights. They tell you about the sore back. They tell you to enjoy every moment.

But there is one thing they hardly ever mention.

The Thing Nobody Says Out Loud

You laughed at a joke, and you leaked. Or you sneezed, and your body did something you did not agree to. Or you ran after your toddler, and you felt a little warm surprise.

Now you carry a pad in your bag. You know where every toilet is. You cross your legs when someone says something funny. You have stopped jumping, running, and dancing, and you have told nobody.

Sound familiar?

Over the years, I have heard this whisper from friends, from my sisters, and from women after church. Always low. Always quick. Always with the same sentence: “Please don’t tell anyone.”

Here is what I want you to hear first. **You are not alone, and you are not broken.**

This happens to a very large number of mothers after childbirth. It is common. It is just not talked about. And in many cases, it can get much better.

Why I Wrote This

After a baby, everyone fusses over the child. Your mother-in-law comes. The food comes. The baby gets all the attention, and that is how it should be.

But who looks after the mother’s body once the visitors go home?

Often, nobody. You are left to figure it out alone, with a leaflet if you are lucky and a "you'll be fine" if you are not.

That is why I wrote this guide. I wanted you to have what I wish every new mother had: someone sitting beside her, saying, "Okay. Here is what is happening. Here is what to do about it. Let's start today."

What You Will Find Here

This guide is simple. It is built on a method I call **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**. Five small steps. Each one is easy. Each one builds on the one before.

Everything takes about 10 minutes a day. You can do it in your bedroom, in your parlour, or while the baby naps. No gym. No special machine. No big money.

By the end of 21 days, my hope is that you will understand your body better. You will have real tools in your hands. And you will start to laugh again without watching your own body.

One Honest Word Before We Start

I am a mum, not a doctor. This guide is here to support you, not to replace a proper medical check. If you feel pain, heaviness, bleeding, or a sense that something is really wrong, please see a doctor or a pelvic health physio first. I will show you exactly when to do that in Chapter 3.

For most mothers, though, the first step is simply knowing what is going on. And that starts in the next chapter.

So let's begin with the moment that probably brought you here. You know the one. I want to tell you why it happens, and why nobody warned you. Turn the page, my sister. I'm right here with you.

Chapter 1

The Laugh Nobody Warned You About

So you have read my introduction, and you are still here. Good. That tells me something. It tells me this is not a small thing for you.

Let me start with a story. It is about a friend of mine. I will call her Chioma.

Chioma at the Naming Ceremony

Chioma had her second baby about six months before this day. She wore a beautiful Ankara gown and a gele she woke up early to tie. She looked fine. She looked more than fine.

At the naming ceremony, her cousin told a joke about the pastor. It was a very good joke. Chioma laughed so hard that she bent forward and held the plastic chair.

And then she felt it. A warm wetness she had not planned for.

She did not stop laughing, because stopping would look strange. But inside, her heart was racing. She pressed her knees together. She waited for the laughter to die down. Then she walked to the toilet with her handbag held in front of her.

She stayed there for ten minutes. She stood in front of the mirror and said to herself, “I am thirty-three years old. What is happening to me?”

She did not tell her husband. She did not tell her mother. She did not tell me, until months later, in a low voice, in my kitchen.

I will tell you what I told her. **That was not your fault, and it is not the end of your story.**

The Little Things You Stopped Doing

Maybe you have not wet yourself at a party. Maybe your leaks are small. A little drop when you sneeze. A little warmth when you carry a heavy bucket.

But I want to ask you something. Since the baby came, what have you quietly stopped doing?

Read this list slowly, and see how many are yours:

- You no longer jump or skip with your children.
- You stopped running, even for a bus.
- You hold a pillow or cross your legs when you laugh.
- You always check where the nearest toilet is before you sit anywhere.
- You carry a pad or extra underwear in your bag, “just in case.”
- You skip dancing at weddings, even when the music is calling your name.
- You avoid long church services, or you sit near the exit.
- You feel nervous about being close to your husband.

If you ticked even two of those, you are not being dramatic. You are living around a problem. And living around a problem is tiring.

It is like when NEPA takes light every evening, and you start planning your whole day around it. You charge your phone early. You cook before 6pm. You stop inviting people over. Slowly, your life gets smaller to fit the problem.

I do not want your life to get smaller. I want it bigger.

Why Nobody Warned You

Let me ask you something. Before your baby came, did anyone sit you down and say, “My dear, after childbirth, your bladder may behave strangely, and here is what to do”?

I would bet money that they did not.

Think about Omugwo. After a baby arrives, a mother or mother-in-law comes to stay. She cooks the pepper soup. She bathes the baby. She makes sure you eat well and rest. It is a beautiful tradition, and I will always respect it.

But here is the honest truth. Omugwo looks after the baby, and it looks after your food and your rest. Very few people use it to look after this part of your body. Not because they do not love you. Because they were never told either.

Your mother did not talk about it. Her mother did not talk about it. So everyone quietly carried it, and everyone thought they were the only one.

The hospital is not much better. You get your check-up. They look at the baby. They ask if you are bleeding. Then you go home with a bag of drugs and a leaflet you never open.

That is how a whole generation of women ended up suffering in silence.

How Common Is This, Really?

Here is something that may surprise you.

Many studies suggest that about **one in three women** leak a little urine after having a baby. One in three. That means in a room of nine mothers, around three of them are dealing with this right now. Smiling, drinking their Fanta, and saying nothing.

So the woman beside you at church? The one who looks so put-together? There is a real chance she is checking her bag for a pad.

You are not odd. You are not careless. You are not "too young for this" or "too weak." Your body did something amazing. It carried and delivered a human being. And now some of the muscles that did that heavy work need help to find their strength again.

That is it. That is the whole story. Muscles that worked very hard and now need to be retrained.

What To Do Tonight

I do not want you to read this chapter and feel only sad. I want you to do one small thing. It takes five minutes.

1. Get a small notebook or open the notes on your phone.

2. Write the heading "My Leak Moments."

3. Write down the three moments when you leak most. Be honest. Is it when you sneeze? When you laugh? When you lift your child?

4. Next to each, write how it makes you feel. Embarrassed? Scared? Angry? Just one word.

5. Keep it somewhere private. We will use it later.

Why do this? Because you cannot fix what you have not named. And once you write it down, it stops being a vague shame. It becomes a clear problem with clear moments. And clear problems can be worked on.

So if you take nothing else from this chapter, remember this: **you did nothing wrong, you are far from alone, and this is a muscle problem, not a character problem.**

Now, you might be thinking, “But Nnenna, I already tried the Kegels. I already tried the pads. I even tried to just wait it out. Why has nothing worked?”

Good question. In fact, it is the best question. Because the answer is not what most people think. In the next chapter, I will show you the one mistake that nearly every mother makes, and why it may be the very reason you are still leaking. It surprised me when I first heard it. I think it will surprise you too.

Chapter 2

Why Kegels, Pads, and "It Will Pass" Haven't Worked

So now you know the big truth from the last chapter. You are not alone, and this is a muscle problem, not a character problem. I hope you wrote down your three Leak Moments. Keep that page close, because we are about to use what it taught you.

I ended the last chapter by asking you something. Why has nothing worked so far?

Let me show you. I promise you, it is not because you are lazy. And it is not because your body is "special."

The Things You Already Tried

Let me guess what you have done. Tell me if I am wrong.

You tried **Kegels**, because somebody said "just do your Kegels." You tried **pads and liners**, because you needed something right now. You tried **drinking less water**, hoping less going in would mean less coming out. And you tried **waiting**, because your mother said, "It will pass."

Each of these made sense. Each of them failed you for a reason. Let me go through them one by one.

Mistake Number 1: Doing Kegels the Wrong Way

Here is the part that surprised me when I first heard it.

Many women are told to "squeeze down there." But nobody shows them which muscle to squeeze. So what do they do? They squeeze their buttocks. They pull in their stomach. They press their thighs together. They hold their breath.

Some even **push down** instead of lifting up. That is the opposite of what you need. Pushing down puts more pressure on the very muscles that are already tired.

It is like trying to switch off your generator by kicking the fuel tank. You are putting in effort, but you are pressing the wrong thing.

Here are the most common Kegel mistakes:

1. **Squeezing the bum, thighs, or tummy** instead of the deep muscle inside.
2. **Pushing down** instead of gently lifting and closing.
3. **Holding your breath** while you squeeze.
4. **Never fully relaxing** between squeezes. A muscle needs to let go, too.
5. **Doing it while peeing**, again and again. Stopping your urine mid-flow now and then to check the muscle is one thing. Doing it as a daily exercise can confuse your bladder.

I know. It is a lot of ways to go wrong. And that is exactly why the old "just do Kegels" advice fails so many mothers. It is like telling someone "just drive" without showing them where the gears are.

In Chapter 3, I will show you how to find the right muscle, step by step. Do not worry.

Mistake Number 2: Pads Manage, They Do Not Fix

Let me say this gently, because I understand why you use them. When you are leaking, a pad is a friend. It saves you at the party. It saves you in the market.

But think about a roof that leaks when it rains. You put a bucket under it. The bucket is useful. But the roof is still leaking.

A pad is the bucket. It catches the problem. It does nothing for the roof.

And there is a second cost. Pads add up. A pack here, a pack there, month after month. When you count it over a year, it is real money. Money you could use for your child's school fees.

I am not saying throw your pads away today. Keep them while you work on the roof. But the goal is to fix the roof.

Mistake Number 3: Drinking Less Water

This one worries me the most, because it feels so logical.

"If I drink less, I will pee less. If I pee less, I will leak less."

But here is what really happens. When you drink too little, your urine becomes dark and strong. Strong urine **irritates your bladder**. An irritated bladder wants to empty more often and more urgently. So you may leak even more. Not less.

Not drinking enough can also lead to constipation. And straining on the toilet puts even more pressure on your tired muscles. So you are making the problem worse from two sides.

So tonight, let me ask you to do one thing. Start drinking water again, steadily through the day. Not a big gulp all at once. Small, regular sips. Your urine should be a pale yellow, like light lemonade.

One quick warning. If you feel a burning pain when you pee, you have a fever, or you see blood, that is not a muscle problem. That could be an infection. Please see a doctor.

Mistake Number 4: "It Will Pass"

Now, I do not want to be unfair to your mother. She is not completely wrong.

Some leaking does improve in the first few months after birth, as your body heals. That is real.

But here is the catch. If you are still leaking at six months, or nine months, or two years, waiting alone may not be enough. Muscles do not retrain themselves just because time has passed. If your arm was weak after a long illness, you would not wait for it to get strong by itself. You would start moving it.

I once heard a woman say she had been "waiting for it to pass" for eleven years. Eleven years. Her youngest was in secondary school. She laughed when she told it, but her eyes were not laughing.

I do not want you to wait eleven years. I do not even want you to wait eleven weeks.

The Real Cause (And It Is Good News)

So what is really going on?

Deep inside your lower belly, there is a group of muscles that works like a **hammock**. It holds up your bladder and other organs. It also helps you close the "door" when you laugh, cough, or sneeze.

Pregnancy and childbirth put that hammock under heavy strain for months. It stretches. It gets tired. And sometimes, it simply forgets how to switch on at the right moment.

That is the key. In many mothers, the muscle is not "damaged forever." It is **out of practice**. It needs to be found, woken up, and trained.

And muscles can be trained. Every woman who has ever learned to cook jollof rice from scratch started out not knowing how. You practised. You got better. The same is true here.

What Changes in 21 Days

Here is what I am promising you, and I want to be honest about it.

I cannot promise a miracle. I cannot promise that every single woman will be completely dry in three weeks. Bodies are different, and I would be lying if I said otherwise.

But this is what I can tell you. If you follow the steps in this guide for **10 minutes a day for 21 days**, you will know how to find the right muscle. You will have a trick to help you hold in the moment you laugh or sneeze. You will have a plan that grows stronger each week. And many mothers notice real improvement.

You will feel in control again, and that is worth more than any pad.

So if you take one thing from this chapter, remember this: **the problem was never that you are weak. The problem was that nobody showed you the right way.**

Now it is time to fix that. In the next chapter, I am going to take you to the very first step of **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**, which is the "L." I will show you how to find the exact muscle you need, with a simple check you can do lying on your bed. Many mothers feel a difference in their very first sitting. Find a quiet corner, my sister. Let's go.

Chapter 3

L for Locate, Finding the Muscle Nobody Showed You

So now you know the truth. The problem was never that you are weak. It was that nobody showed you the right way.

Today we start fixing that. This is the "L" in **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**, which stands for **Locate**. Before you can train a muscle, you have to find it. And I promise you, this is easier than you think.

First, Please Read This Part

I told you in the introduction that I would show you when to see a doctor. This is that moment, and I want you to read it before you try anything.

Please see a doctor, midwife, or pelvic health physio first if you have any of these:

- A feeling of heaviness, dragging, or something "coming down" in your vagina
- A bulge you can feel or see
- Pain during sex, or pain when you exercise or lift
- Bleeding that is not your normal period
- Burning when you pee, a fever, or blood in your urine
- Difficulty emptying your bladder, or a weak, slow stream
- Leaking from your bowel, or not being able to hold in wind
- Your baby is less than six weeks old, or you had a bad tear or stitches that still hurt

If none of these is you, wonderful. Keep reading. If one of them is you, please get checked first, and come back to this guide afterwards with your doctor's blessing. There is no shame in that. It is simply wise.

Why Finding the Muscle Matters So Much

Remember the hammock I told you about? The group of muscles deep in your lower belly that holds your bladder up and helps close the "door"?

That is your **pelvic floor**. I will use that name from now on, so you can look it up or talk to a doctor about it.

Here is the funny thing. You cannot see it. You cannot point to it. It is hidden deep inside. So most women have never really "met" this muscle, even though it has been working for them since the day they were born.

It is like when light finally comes back after a long NEPA blackout, and you are walking in the dark house trying to find the right switch. You press the wrong ones. You switch on the fan, the gate light, the passage light. Everything but the one you wanted. Then, click. The right switch. Light.

That click is what we are looking for today.

The Easy Way to Find It

Get comfortable first. Lie on your bed with your knees bent and your feet flat. Put a pillow under your head. Make sure the door is closed and your phone is quiet.

Now try this:

1. Take a slow breath in through your nose. Let your belly rise. Breathe out gently through your mouth.

2. Do that three times. Let your shoulders drop. Let your jaw go soft.

3. Now imagine you are trying to **stop yourself passing wind** in a crowded room. Squeeze gently around the back passage, as if holding it in.

4. Next, imagine you are trying to **stop the flow of urine**. Feel the muscle around the front lift and close.

5. Now try to do both together. You should feel a gentle **squeeze and lift**, deep inside, as if you are pulling something up and in.

6. Hold it for just three seconds. Then let go **completely**. Feel the muscle relax.

That's it. That feeling, the small lift and squeeze, is your pelvic floor.

If you felt it, congratulations. You just met a muscle that has been waiting for you.

How to Know You Are Squeezing the Right Thing

A lot of mothers feel nothing the first time. Others feel the wrong muscles working. Both are normal. Let me show you how to check.

The Three Signs You Are Squeezing Wrong:

1. **Your bottom is clenching.** Place one hand under your buttock. It should stay soft. If it goes hard, you are using the wrong muscle.

2. **Your tummy is pushing out or tensing hard.** Place your other hand on your lower belly, just below your belly button. It should stay quite soft, maybe with a tiny, gentle tightening. If it bulges outward, you are pushing down. Stop, and start again more gently.

3. **You are holding your breath.** If your breathing stops, so does the right muscle work. Keep breathing, slow and easy, the whole time.

And here is the one that is different for everyone. If you lift and squeeze correctly, you might feel a **gentle pulling up** inside. Some women describe it as a tiny lift, like a lift in a building going up one floor. It is gentle. It is not a big, hard squeeze.

If you really cannot feel anything at all after a few tries, do not worry. That does not mean something is wrong with you. It means you may need a physio to guide you, and that is a very good thing to do. Many women find their breakthrough that way.

One Extra Check (Only Once)

There is one more trick some mothers find useful. The next time you pee, stop the flow for a second, then let it continue. The muscle you used to stop it is your pelvic floor.

Please do this **once, only to find the muscle**. Do not make it a habit. Doing it again and again can confuse your bladder. After you have found the feeling, you will practise lying down, never on the toilet.

Your First Ten-Minute Session

Now, for the good part. This is your Quick Win, the first real session. Set a timer for ten minutes and settle into your position on the bed.

1. **Breathe (1 minute).** In through the nose, out through the mouth. Let everything soften.

2. **Slow squeezes (4 minutes).** Lift and squeeze gently, hold for **3 seconds**, then relax fully for **6 seconds**. Do this **5 times**. Take a short rest. Then do 5 more.

3. **Quick squeezes (2 minutes).** Squeeze and let go quickly, like a flicker. Do **5 quick squeezes**, rest, then another 5.

4. **Check your signs (1 minute).** Is your bottom soft? Is your tummy gentle? Are you still breathing? Fix anything that slipped.

5. **Finish with a full release (2 minutes).** Lie quietly. Let the muscle go completely loose. Breathe easy.

Please do not push yourself. If the muscle feels tired or starts to ache, stop. A tired muscle is a muscle that has worked. Better to do less and do it right than to do more and do it wrong.

I had a friend, Chioma, who tried this on a Sunday afternoon after church. She told me later, "Nnenna, I did it three times before I got it. On the fourth, I felt a little lift and I almost cried. For the first time in months, I felt like my body was listening to me again."

That is what this first step is about. It is not about being perfect. It is about getting your body to listen again.

What To Do After Today

Before you close this chapter, do these three small things:

1. **Practise your session once a day** from today. Morning, afternoon, or night. Pick a time you can keep. I like right after the baby's afternoon sleep.

2. **Check your three signs** each time. Soft bottom, soft tummy, easy breathing.

3. **Add a note** to your Leak Moments page: "Day 1: I found the muscle" (or "Day 1: still searching," which is perfectly fine).

So if you take nothing else from this chapter, remember this: **before you can strengthen the muscle, you must find the right muscle, and gentle beats hard every time.**

You are now holding something many mothers never get: the first piece of the puzzle. You have found your switch. But here is the next question. Finding the muscle in your quiet bedroom is one thing. What happens when you are in a crowded church, or your toddler makes you laugh in the kitchen, or you have to sneeze? In the next chapter, I am going to teach you a small trick called **the Knack**. It takes about one second, and it is the thing that helps you hold on right when you need it most. It is my favourite part of the whole guide, and I cannot wait to show you.

Chapter 4

A and U, Activate and Use the Knack

Last time, you found your switch. That small lift and squeeze deep inside is your pelvic floor, and you now know it is there. If you felt it even once, hold on to that feeling. It is the key to everything we do from here.

But finding a muscle in your quiet bedroom is one thing. Making it work when your toddler says something hilarious, or when you sneeze at the wrong time, is another. That is what this chapter is about. It covers the "A" and the "U" in **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**: **Activate** and **Use**.

A for Activate: Waking Up the Muscle

Think about learning to drive. First you practise in an empty compound. Then you move to a quiet street. Only after that do you take on the roundabout at Ojota. Nobody starts at the roundabout.

Your pelvic floor is the same. You have practised lying down, and that is the empty compound. Now we take it to harder places.

For the next few days, do your daily session in three positions:

1. **Lying down.** Start here, like before, so the muscle remembers what it is doing.

2. **Sitting.** Sit on a firm chair with your feet flat on the floor and your back tall. Breathe out, then gently lift and squeeze. Hold for three seconds. Let go fully.

3. **Standing.** Stand with your feet hip-width apart, maybe at the kitchen counter. Breathe out, lift, squeeze, hold, release.

Standing is harder, because gravity is now pressing down. That is why it matters. It is much closer to real life. If you cannot feel the squeeze standing up, go back to sitting for a few more days. There is no prize for rushing.

Keep the same three checks from Chapter 3: a soft bottom, a soft tummy, and easy breathing.

U for Use: The Knack

Now for my favourite part. I told you I would teach you a trick that takes one second. Here it is.

The Knack simply means this: **tighten your pelvic floor just before the thing that makes you leak, and hold it through the moment.**

That is all. You squeeze first, and then you cough, or sneeze, or laugh, or lift.

Let me explain why this works. When you cough or sneeze, pressure suddenly shoots down onto your bladder. If your pelvic floor is not already switched on, the "door" opens for a moment, and a little urine escapes.

But if you have already lifted and closed that door **before** the pressure arrives, the door holds.

It is like closing the gate **before** the goat enters the compound, not after. Once the goat is in, you are chasing it round the yard. But if the gate is already shut, there is no drama.

How to Do the Knack

Here are the steps. Read them twice, then practise.

1. **Notice the moment coming.** You feel a sneeze building. You see a heavy bucket you are about to lift. You are about to stand up from a low chair.

2. **Breathe out gently.** Do not hold your breath.

3. **Lift and squeeze** your pelvic floor, the same gentle lift and close you found in Chapter 3.

4. **Keep it held** while you cough, sneeze, or lift.

5. **Let go** when it is over, and breathe normally.

Do not squeeze with all your might. Think of a firm, quick lift, not a clenched fist.

Practise Before You Need It

You do not want to try this for the first time at a wedding. Practise at home first.

Stand beside the bathroom sink. Give one gentle cough **without** the Knack. Notice how it feels. Then give one gentle cough **with** the Knack. Squeeze first, and then cough. Feel the difference.

Do this a few times a day for a few days. If you are still having leaks, wear a pad while you practise. Practice does not need to be perfect to be useful.

Many mothers feel a real difference quickly. Some feel a little. Both are good, because your muscle is learning. Studies on this simple technique suggest it can reduce leaking for a lot of women, but every body is different, so go at your own pace.

Using the Knack in Real Life

Once you can do it at home, start using it where life actually happens. These are the moments I want you to watch for:

- **Sneezing or coughing:** Squeeze before you let it out. If you feel the sneeze rising, you have a second to prepare.

- **Lifting your baby or a heavy load:** Breathe out and squeeze **before** you pick them up. Not during. Before.

- **Standing up from a low seat:** Many mothers leak when they stand up from the sofa or a plastic chair. Squeeze first, then rise.

- **Laughing:** This one is trickier, because laughter comes fast. You cannot always see a joke coming. But when you feel a big belly laugh building, a quick squeeze helps. Over time, it becomes automatic.

- **Jumping, running, or dancing:** We are not there yet. Save these for later, when your plan builds your strength.

I remember when my youngest was small and loved to jump on the bed. He would shout, “Mummy, catch me!” and throw himself at me. I learned very quickly to breathe out and brace before he landed. I did not do it for my pelvic floor back then, I did it to avoid a kick in the stomach. But the lesson is the same. Prepare for the impact **before** it arrives.

Your Seven-Day Bladder Diary

Now, here is the second job for this week. I want you to keep a simple bladder diary.

I know. It sounds boring. But it is one of the most useful tools you will have. It shows you your patterns. It shows you what is making things worse. And if you ever visit a doctor or physio, it tells them exactly what they need to know.

For seven days, fill in a table like this. You can draw it in a notebook or keep it on your phone:

Time	What I drank	Went to toilet?	Did I leak?	What was I doing?
7:30am	Cup of tea	Yes	No	Getting dressed
10:15am	Water	No	Small leak	Sneezing in the kitchen
1:00pm	Malt drink	Yes	No	Eating lunch

Do not worry about being exact. A rough guess is fine. Just be honest.

At the end of seven days, look at your diary and ask yourself:

1. When do I leak most? Morning, afternoon, or evening?
2. What was I doing each time? Sneezing, lifting, laughing, rushing to the toilet?
3. Did any drinks seem to make it worse?
4. How often am I going to the toilet in a day?

Add this to your Leak Moments page from Chapter 1. Now you are not guessing any more. You are watching your body like a detective.

If your diary shows that you are going to the toilet very often, struggling to empty your bladder, or feeling a sudden strong urge you cannot hold, mention it to a doctor. That is a different pattern, and it deserves a proper check.

What You Should Be Doing This Week

Let me gather it all in one place for you:

1. Practise your ten-minute session once a day, lying down, then sitting, then standing.
2. Practise the Knack a few times each day: on a cough at the sink, on lifting a bag, on standing from a chair.
3. Fill in your bladder diary every day for seven days.

4. Keep drinking water steadily through the day.

5. Be kind to yourself. A tired muscle is a muscle that has worked.

If you take only one thing from this chapter, remember this: **squeeze first, then cough, sneeze, or lift.** The Knack is small, but it is the part of this method you will use every single day of your life.

Now you can find your muscle, and you can switch it on when you need it. That is a lot. But here is where it gets exciting. Holding on in the moment is one thing. **Building real strength** so that the muscle stays strong without you thinking about it is something else. In the next chapter, I am going to give you the full 21-day rebuild, week by week, with a clear plan for each day. It is the heart of this whole guide, and I think you are going to love how simple it is. Let's get you strong, my sister.

Chapter 5

G for Grow, Your 21-Day Rebuild

You can now find your muscle, switch it on, and use the Knack when life surprises you. If you have been practising, you may already feel a small difference. Even if you do not, you have done something important: you have started.

Now we get to the heart of this whole guide. This is the "G" in **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**, which stands for **Grow**. We are going to build real strength, step by step, over 21 days.

How This Plan Works

Think of it like learning to cook a new dish. You do not begin with a party for 50 people. You start with one pot, and you add more as you get better.

The 21 days are split into three weeks:

- **Week 1: Control.** You get good at finding and switching on the muscle.
- **Week 2: Endurance.** You teach the muscle to hold on for longer.
- **Week 3: Real Life.** You use your strength in the moments that matter.

Each session takes about **10 minutes**. That is all. Less than one episode of your favourite Nollywood series.

Two simple rules before we start:

1. **Gentle beats hard.** Every squeeze is a gentle lift, never a clench.
2. **Rest is part of the work.** Rest for at least as long as you hold. A muscle that never relaxes cannot grow strong.

And remember the red flags from Chapter 3. If anything on that list shows up, pause and see a professional.

Week 1: Control (Days 1 to 7)

This week is about doing it right, not doing it a lot.

Your daily session:

1. Breathe slowly for one minute.
2. Do **8 slow squeezes**: lift, hold for **3 seconds**, rest for **6 seconds**.
3. Do **8 quick squeezes**: lift and let go, like a flicker.
4. Finish with one minute of complete relaxation.

Do your first four days **lying down**. On Day 5, move to **sitting**. On Day 6, try **standing** at the counter. On Day 7, rest from the full session and only practise the Knack with a gentle cough at the sink.

Do not worry if it feels hard to find the muscle some days. Tiredness, a stressful day, and a baby who did not sleep can all make it harder. Just show up and do your best.

Week 2: Endurance (Days 8 to 14)

Now your muscle knows the way. This week, we teach it to stay switched on longer.

Your daily session:

1. Breathe slowly for one minute.
2. Do **8 slow squeezes**, holding for **5 seconds** and resting for **10 seconds**. If 5 seconds feels too long, stay at 4 and build up.
3. Do **10 quick squeezes**.
4. Do **3 Knack practices**: squeeze, then give a gentle cough.
5. Finish with one minute of complete relaxation.

Do your sessions **sitting or standing** this week, with one lying-down session if you are tired. And begin using the Knack in real life every time you cough, sneeze, or lift something.

On **Day 14**, take it light again. One gentle session, nothing more.

Week 3: Real Life (Days 15 to 21)

This is the exciting week. We take your strength out of the bedroom and into the real world.

Your daily session:

1. Breathe slowly for one minute.
2. Do **8 slow squeezes**, holding for up to **8 seconds** if comfortable, with a full rest between each.
3. Do **10 quick squeezes**.
4. Add **movement**: squeeze, then do a slow **mini squat** (like sitting back into a chair). Do 5.
5. Add **lifting**: breathe out, squeeze, then lift something light like a water bottle or your baby's bag. Do 5.
6. Finish with one minute of complete relaxation.

Notice what we are doing. We are training the muscle to switch on **before** the movement, which is exactly what the Knack teaches. The more you practise it in small ways, the more automatic it becomes.

Throughout this week, keep your bladder diary going if you can. You may be surprised by what you see.

The Whole Plan at a Glance

Days	Focus	Position	Hold time
1-4	Control	Lying down	3 seconds
5-6	Control	Sitting, then standing	3 seconds
7	Rest day	Knack practice only	None
8-13	Endurance	Sitting or standing	4-5 seconds
14	Rest day	One gentle session	3 seconds
15-20	Real Life	Standing and moving	Up to 8 seconds

21	Celebrate	Full session plus a review	Your best

Take a screenshot of this table, or copy it into your notebook. Tick each day as you finish it. There is something very satisfying about ticking boxes.

How To Fit This Into Your Real Life

I know what you are thinking. “Nnenna, I have a baby who does not sleep, other children who need dinner, and a house that never stays clean. When will I find ten minutes?”

I understand. Here is what works for many mothers: **attach your session to something you already do.**

- **After the baby’s morning feed.** You are already sitting down. Do your session right there.
- **During the afternoon nap.** Lie down, close your eyes, and do it before you pick up your phone.
- **When NEPA takes light.** Instead of complaining in the dark, do your session. Use the blackout for something good.
- **At bedtime.** Lie down and do it before you sleep.

Set a reminder on your phone. Name it something private, like “My 10 minutes.” Nobody needs to know what it means.

And if you miss a day, do not punish yourself. Just carry on the next day. One missed day will not undo your progress. Three weeks of mostly-showing-up is far better than three days of perfect effort that you then abandon.

What Progress Looks Like

Everyone is different, so I will not promise you a timeline. But here are the milestones to watch for:

- **End of Week 1:** You can find the muscle quickly and feel the lift lying down and sitting.

- **End of Week 2:** You can hold for several seconds, and the Knack starts to feel more natural.

- **End of Week 3:** You are using your strength in daily life, and many mothers notice fewer or smaller leaks.

If you do not notice a big change by Day 21, please do not give up and do not blame yourself. It may simply mean you need more time, or that a pelvic health physio can fine-tune your technique. That is a good next step, not a failure.

When Things Feel Off

A few quick troubleshooting notes:

- **The muscle feels sore or tired:** Rest for a day and then do a shorter session. Muscles need recovery.

- **You still cannot feel it:** Go back to the lying-down position for a few more days. Do not skip ahead.

- **Your leaks seem worse:** Check your technique. Are you pushing down, holding your breath, or clenching your bottom? If it continues, see a professional.

- **You feel pain, heaviness, or a bulge:** Stop and get checked by a doctor or pelvic health physio.

- **You feel tense all the time down there:** Some women hold too tightly. Remember that **letting go fully is half the exercise.** A physio can help if relaxing feels hard.

So if you take only one thing from this chapter, remember this: **small, gentle, regular practice beats big, hard, occasional effort every time.** Ten minutes a day, for 21 days, is a promise you can keep.

Now, here is something many people miss. Getting strong is one half of the story. The other half is **keeping** that strength, and not undoing your own hard work without knowing it. Some of the things we do every day, like how we sit on the toilet, what we drink, and how we lift our children, can either protect your progress or quietly weaken it. In the next chapter, we reach the final letter of the method, the “H” for **Hold**, and I will show you how to make these results last for good. Some of what I share may surprise you.

Chapter 6

H for Hold, Keeping Your Results for Good

So now you have your 21-day plan in your hands. You know how to find the muscle, switch it on, and grow its strength week by week. If you have been doing your ten minutes, give yourself a little clap. Not many people finish what they start, and you are doing it.

But here is something I learned the hard way. Getting strong is one thing. Staying strong is another. And some of the things we do every single day can quietly undo our good work without our knowing.

This is the "H" in **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**, which stands for **Hold**. It is how you keep your results for good.

The Toilet Habits Nobody Taught You

Let me start with a topic we do not talk about at dinner. How you sit on the toilet.

It sounds silly, but it matters. Straining and rushing on the toilet put extra pressure on the very muscles you are trying to rebuild.

Here is the better way:

1. **Sit fully down.** Do not hover over a public toilet seat. I know, I know. Some toilets are not very inviting. But hovering stops your muscles from relaxing, and then your bladder does not empty properly. Wipe the seat, lay tissue on it, or use a seat cover if you can.

2. **Put your feet on a small stool**, if you have one, so your knees sit a little higher than your hips. A plastic bucket turned upside down works if you are on a budget.

3. **Lean forward slightly** and rest your forearms on your thighs.

4. **Relax and breathe.** Let your belly soften. Do not push or strain.

5. **Take your time.** Let the urine come on its own. Wait until you are properly finished before you stand.

Now for one more habit, and it is a big one. **Stop going to the toilet "just in case."**

Many mothers do this. "I am about to leave the house, let me go just in case." "We are about to start the church service, let me go just in case."

I understand why. But when you do this, you train your bladder to feel full when it is not. Over time, your bladder becomes more nervous and wants to empty at smaller and smaller amounts. That can make your urges stronger.

A good rule is to go when you feel a normal need, which for most people is about every three to four hours during the day. If you are going far more often than that, bring it up with a doctor. That is not a muscle problem alone.

What You Drink and Eat Can Help or Hurt

Remember the bladder diary from Chapter 4? This is where it becomes very useful.

Some drinks can **irritate the bladder** in some women, and make the urge to go stronger. They do not do it to everyone. That is why I call this a list to test, not a list of rules.

Watch out for these:

- **Tea and coffee**, especially strong ones
- **Fizzy drinks** like cola and fanta
- **Energy drinks**
- **Alcohol**
- **Very sweet drinks**, including some malt drinks
- **Very sour or acidic drinks**, which can irritate some women

Here is how to test it. Pick **one** drink from the list that you have most often. Cut it out completely for one week, and keep your bladder diary going. Did your urgency or leaking change? If yes, you have found one of your triggers. If no, put it back and test another.

Do not cut everything at once. If you do, you will not know which one was the problem, and you will be miserable.

And remember what I said in Chapter 2. **Do not stop drinking water.** Aim for steady sips through the day, and let your urine be pale yellow.

The Secret Enemy: Constipation

Here is something that surprises many mothers. If you are often constipated, your leaking may be worse.

Think about it. When you strain on the toilet, you are pushing hard against the same muscles you are trying to strengthen. Doing that daily is like trying to heal a wound while scratching it.

So looking after your tummy is part of looking after your pelvic floor.

Here are simple, local ways to help:

- **Eat more fibre.** Beans, ugu and other leafy vegetables, okra, unripe plantain, oats, and whole grains are all good.
- **Eat fruit every day.** Pawpaw, oranges, pears, apples, and watermelon are easy options.
- **Balance your swallows.** Eba and other heavy swallows are filling, but when you eat them with very little vegetable, they can leave some people bound up. Add plenty of vegetables to the soup.
- **Drink enough water**, as we said.
- **Move your body.** Even a short walk helps your bowels.
- **Never ignore the urge.** When your body says "go," go. Holding it in makes things harder.

If constipation is severe or lasts a long time, please see a doctor. There may be something else going on.

Lifting Your Children Without Hurting Yourself

Now let us talk about the heavy part of motherhood. Literally.

You carry your baby. You carry your toddler. You carry the shopping, the bucket of water, the school bags, and sometimes all of them at once.

Each time you lift, pressure shoots down onto your pelvic floor. So lifting well matters.

Here is how:

1. **Prepare first.** Remember the Knack? Breathe out and gently squeeze **before** you lift.

2. **Bend your knees**, not your back. Hold the weight close to your body.

3. **Keep breathing.** Never hold your breath while lifting.

4. **Let your legs do the work.**

5. **Share the load.** Carry two lighter bags instead of one heavy one. Ask your husband or older children to help.

6. **Do not rush.** Slow, steady lifts are kinder to your muscles.

There is a mother I know who used to pick up her toddler from the floor with one swing, bent over from the waist, while holding her breath. When she started bending her knees and breathing out first, she told me, “It felt strange for about three days. Then it felt normal. Now I do it without thinking.”

That is how a habit forms. Strange first, normal later.

Getting Back to Exercise Safely

I know some of you are itching to get back to running, dancing, or the gym. I understand. But please do it in a way that protects the work you have done.

First, if you have not been told it is safe to exercise after your baby, check with your doctor or midwife. Most women get their check-up at around six weeks, but your own body and your own birth may need more time.

Then go step by step:

1. **Start with walking.** It is simple, free, and kind to your body. Build up slowly.

2. **Add gentle strength work** like bodyweight squats and light weights, using the Knack as you lift.

3. **Move to low-impact activity** like swimming (once any bleeding has fully stopped and you are cleared), cycling, or dance without jumping.

4. **Leave high-impact exercise for last.** Running, jumping, and skipping put the most pressure on your pelvic floor. Many health professionals suggest waiting until at least about three months after birth, and only when you have no heaviness, no pain, and little or no leaking. Some women need longer.

Here is a simple test before you try a high-impact move. Can you do ten bodyweight squats without any leaking, heaviness, or dragging? Can you stand on one leg for ten seconds while squeezing your pelvic floor? If yes, you may be ready to try a little jogging. If no, build up more first.

If you leak or feel heaviness during exercise, stop and step back to the earlier stage. That is not failing. That is your body telling you it needs a bit more time.

Your Maintenance Plan: Three Times a Week

Now let us talk about what happens after Day 21.

You do not need to do ten minutes every day for the rest of your life. Once you have built your strength, you can ease off to a lighter schedule.

Here is what I suggest:

- **Three times a week**, do one full session: slow holds, quick squeezes, and a few Knack practices.

- **Every day**, use the Knack when you cough, sneeze, lift, or stand from a low chair. This one stays with you for good.

- **Once a month**, do a quick check. Do you feel any new leaks? Any heaviness? Is your technique still good? If something changes, go back to the 21-day plan for a week.

Put these sessions on a day you can remember. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday work for many mothers. Treat it like brushing your teeth. It is small, quick, and protects you for years.

And please remember that big life changes can affect your pelvic floor again. Another pregnancy, a long illness, a heavy cough that will not go, and the changes that come with menopause later in life are all times to bring your practice back and check in with a professional.

So if you take only one thing from this chapter, remember this: **the results you build in 21 days are protected by small daily habits, and small daily habits are far easier than starting again.**

You now know the full method. You can find the muscle, switch it on, use the Knack, build your strength, and hold your results. That is the whole of **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**, and I am so proud of you for coming this far.

But here is what I know about knowledge. It is only useful when you use it. And the hardest part is often the very first step, especially the conversations we are afraid to have. How do you tell your husband? What should you say to your doctor so you are taken seriously? And what exactly do you do tomorrow morning? In the final chapter, I will give you a simple roadmap, and even the exact words to use. Come, let us finish this together.

Chapter 7

Your Day 1 Roadmap

You have come a long way. You can find the muscle, switch it on, use the Knack, build your strength, and keep your results. That is the whole of **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**, and you now know more about your body than most women ever get told.

But I know what happens with guides like this. We read them with all our heart, we feel inspired, and then the baby cries, the pot burns, and the guide goes quiet on the phone. So let me make this very simple. Here is exactly what to do, starting today.

Today

You do not need to do everything. Just these small things:

1. **Find your page.** Open your notebook or phone note with your Leak Moments from Chapter 1.

2. **Do your first ten-minute session.** Lie down and follow Chapter 3. Check your three signs: soft bottom, soft tummy, easy breathing.

3. **Pick your daily time.** Choose one moment you can keep, like after the baby's afternoon nap or right before bed.

4. **Set a private reminder.** Name it "My 10 minutes." Nobody needs to know what it means.

5. **Drink water steadily.** Small sips through the day.

That is all for today. If you did these five things, you have started.

Tomorrow

1. Do your session again. Same time, same place.

2. Practise the Knack once at the sink: squeeze, then give a gentle cough.

3. Start your seven-day bladder diary from Chapter 4. A rough guess is fine.

This Week

- Follow Week 1 of the 21-day plan from Chapter 5. Lying down for the first four days, then sitting, then standing.
- Use the Knack whenever you sneeze, cough, lift, or stand from a low seat.
- Watch for red flags. If anything on the list in Chapter 3 shows up, pause and see a professional.
- Choose one irritating drink to test, if you suspect one. Only one.
- Tick your days off. It feels good.

The Next Three Weeks

- **Days 8 to 14:** Endurance. Longer holds and more Knack practice.
- **Days 15 to 21:** Real Life. Squats, light lifting, and moving with your muscle switched on.
- **Day 21:** Celebrate. Then look back at your diary and your Leak Moments page. Notice what has changed.
- **After Day 21:** Three full sessions a week, plus the Knack every day.

How To Tell Your Husband

Some of you reading this have not told your husband. You have been hiding pads and rushing to the toilet and making excuses. I understand. It is not an easy conversation.

But here is what I have noticed. The silence often does more damage than the problem. Your husband may be wondering why you pull away, why you avoid closeness, why you seem tense. He may even think it is about him.

So choose a quiet moment. Not in the bedroom at night, and not in the middle of a quarrel. Maybe on a Sunday afternoon, with the children busy. Then try something like this:

"I want to tell you something that has been bothering me. Since the baby, sometimes I leak urine when I laugh, cough, or lift something. It is common after childbirth, but I have been too shy to say it. It has made me feel nervous and a bit embarrassed, and I think that is why I have been pulling back sometimes. I am doing a plan to strengthen my body, and it would really help me if you could be patient and supportive."

Then stop and let him respond.

You may be surprised. Many husbands feel relief. They have been worrying in silence, too. And some will say, "Why did you not tell me earlier?" and offer to help with the children while you do your ten minutes.

If he does not respond as well as you hoped, do not take that as the end of the road. Give him a little time. Some people need a day to understand something new.

How To Talk To Your Doctor

Now, doctors. Some of them are wonderful. Some are in a hurry. And some mothers come away feeling brushed off with "it is normal after a baby, it will pass."

You do not have to accept that if you are still struggling. Here is how to ask clearly.

Say it plainly. Do not hint. Doctors see many people, and plain words help them help you:

"Since my baby, I leak urine when I cough, sneeze, laugh, or lift. It has been going on for [say how long], and it is affecting my daily life. I would like to be assessed and referred to a pelvic health physiotherapist."

Bring your notes. Take your bladder diary and your Leak Moments page. They show a clear pattern in seconds.

Ask these questions:

1. Could there be an infection or another cause I should rule out?

2. Can you check my pelvic floor, or refer me to someone who can?

3. Is there anything about my birth that might be affecting this?

4. What should I avoid in the meantime?

5. When should I come back if things do not improve?

Know when not to wait. Please go straight to a doctor if you notice any of these:

- Heaviness, dragging, or a bulge in your vagina
- Pain during sex or when exercising
- Burning when you pee, a fever, or blood in your urine
- Trouble emptying your bladder
- Leaking from your bowel
- Leaking that is getting worse instead of better

If you live in the UK, you can ask your GP for a referral to an NHS pelvic health physiotherapist, and some areas let you refer yourself. If you live in Nigeria, many teaching hospitals and private physiotherapy clinics have physiotherapists who treat this. In the US or Canada, look for a pelvic floor physical therapist. You can ask your doctor or midwife for a name.

What Your Life Can Look Like

Let me close with a picture.

Imagine a Sunday in a few weeks. You are at a family gathering. Your cousin tells a story, and everyone bursts out laughing. You laugh too, a proper, full laugh, with your head back.

You do not cross your legs. You do not scan the room for the toilet. You do not feel that small tightening of fear.

You just laugh.

Imagine playing with your children in the compound, chasing them around, and thinking about nothing but their faces. Imagine dancing at a wedding because the music is good and you feel like it. Imagine closeness with your husband without that small voice in your head saying, “What if?”

That is the life I want for you. Not a perfect body. Not a body that bounces back like an advertisement. Just a body you can trust again.

You did not choose this problem. But you chose to do something about it, and that matters more than you know.

So if you remember one thing from this entire guide, let it be this: **you are not broken, you are not alone, and you are allowed to feel at home in your body again.**

Go and live, my sister. And when the next joke comes, laugh with your whole chest.

Conclusion

Before You Go, My Sister

We started this guide with a warm drink and an honest word. I told you that you are not alone and you are not broken. I hope that by now, you believe it.

Let me remind you how far you have come.

You learned why this happens, and that it is a muscle problem, not a character problem. You found a muscle that nobody ever showed you. You learned the Knack, that small one-second squeeze before you cough, sneeze, or lift. You built a plan to grow your strength, and you learned how to hold on to it for good.

That is **The L.A.U.G.H. Method™**: Locate, Activate, Use, Grow, Hold. Five small steps. Ten minutes a day. No gym, no machine, and no big money.

What I Want You To Remember

Some days will go well. You will laugh at a joke and feel nothing but joy. You will lift your toddler and feel steady and strong.

Other days will be harder. You will be tired. You will miss a session. A leak will surprise you, and the old embarrassment will come knocking.

On those days, please do not decide that it failed. Progress does not walk in a straight line. It goes forward, steps back a little, and goes forward again. A bad day is only a bad day. Tomorrow, you start again with ten minutes and a gentle squeeze.

And please be kind to yourself. Your body carried a child. It did hard, beautiful work. It does not need your shame. It needs your patience.

One Last Thing

If this guide has helped you even a little, pass it on. Tell your sister. Tell your friend from church. Tell the woman at the next table who is smiling, and quietly checking her bag.

One conversation can set another mother free. Somebody has to speak first, and now you know that it can be you.

So go on. Do your ten minutes today. Start small and gentle. And the next time the joke comes, laugh with your whole chest.

I am cheering for you, my sister. Always.

With love, Nnenna.

About the Author

Nnenna U. is a mum of three. She knows the beauty and the exhaustion of motherhood, and she believes no mother should have to suffer in silence over something so common and so rarely discussed.

Nnenna wrote this guide because she wanted new mothers to have what many of us never got: a clear, kind, step-by-step explanation, written like a conversation with an older sister who is on your side. She writes in simple words, because she believes that good information should never feel complicated.

When she is not caring for her children, you will find her at the kitchen table with a cup of tea, encouraging other mothers to take care of themselves too.

What To Do Next

You have everything you need to begin. Here is how to make it stick:

- **Print your 21-day table** from Chapter 5 and stick it somewhere private, like inside a wardrobe door.
- **Keep your Leak Moments page and bladder diary together.** They will help you notice progress, and they are useful if you see a doctor.
- **Share this guide with a friend.** Remember, about one in three mothers deal with this. Someone close to you may be waiting for permission to talk about it.
- **Book that check-up** if anything on the red flag list applies, or if you do not see improvement after 21 days.
- **Come back to this guide** whenever life changes: another pregnancy, a long illness, or a stubborn cough. The method is yours for life.

Disclaimer

This guide is for general information and education only. It is not medical advice, and it is not a substitute for assessment, diagnosis, or treatment by a qualified doctor, midwife, or physiotherapist. The author is not a medical professional.

Every body and every birth is different, and results vary from person to person. No outcome is guaranteed. If you are pregnant, recently gave birth, have had surgery or a complicated delivery, or have any health condition, please speak to a healthcare professional before starting any exercise programme.

Stop and seek medical advice if you experience pain, heaviness or a bulge in the vagina, abnormal bleeding, burning when you pass urine, fever, blood in your urine, difficulty emptying your bladder, or if your symptoms get worse. The author and publisher accept no responsibility for any loss or harm arising from the use of this guide.