

Proper Toileting Position

1. Knees should be above hips (about 7-9 inches) or higher if possible. To accomplish this, you can use a stool, laundry basket, or Squatty Potty.
 2. Place your elbows on knees, leaning forward.
 3. Place your jaw on your hands, and make sure your jaw muscles are relaxed.
 4. Breathe into your belly, so you can feel it expand against your thighs. You may also notice that the pelvic floor muscles between the legs relax or lower with every belly breath.
 5. NOTE: If you feel the need to strain/push for bowel movements: inhale into the belly and do a long exhale with pursed lips. This creates downward pressure. You can increase that pressure by tightening the abdominal muscles while keeping the belly expanded.
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Toileting Guidelines

1. Only go to the toilet when you feel the urge to urinate or defecate: it's not a waiting room!
 2. If you have sat on the toilet for more than 10-15 minutes and have not urinated or defecated, clean up and leave the bathroom. Return to the toilet again only when the urge to toilet returns and/or has increased. The bathroom should NOT be the place to sit and read, answer emails, talk on the phone, watch online videos, do your taxes, or anything other than its intended purpose!
 3. For bowel movements: use a warm beverage and a *gentle* abdominal massage to stimulate the bowels if needed.
 4. For bowel movements: Prior to going to the toilet, sit with your knees higher than hips (e.g. on the couch) to relax the puborectalis muscle and move matter towards the rectum.
 5. Avoid straining! It makes your pelvic muscles weaker, raises your blood pressure, increases pressure in the chest, can cause shortness of breath and (in people with cardiac issues) can cause an irregular heart rate.
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Other Helpful Info

- Having the knees higher than the hips is a position that relaxes the puborectalis muscle, which otherwise acts to 'kink,' or close off, the rectum to keep stool inside, and creates less muscle tension globally at the pelvic floor muscles. Straining when knees are in line with or below the hips increases pressure at the pelvic floor. This can result in constipation, difficulty fully emptying the bowels or bladder, hemorrhoids, worsening prolapse, and poorly coordinated pelvic muscle function.
- Sitting on the toilet for more than 10-15 minutes without producing urine or feces indicates that the body is not ready to empty – and straining will not assist in speeding up this process! Moreover, continued and excessive sitting compresses the pelvic and lower extremity nerves and circulatory structures, and teaches the brain and the body that the restroom is not necessarily a place where it can relax and function optimally.
- Breathing into the belly relaxes the pelvic floor muscles, turns up the parasympathetic nervous system (the "rest & digest" system), and helps coordinate urination and defecation, so that we can more fully empty the bladder or the bowels.