

# POTS: impact and management

Dr Sarah Rhodes



Source: [Supine Computing \(mgsloan.com\)](https://mgsloan.com)

# What is POTS?

- A form of dysautonomia
- Symptoms include chest pain, palpitations, lightheadedness and breathlessness that are worse with the upright posture
- Diagnosis: Active stand test/NASA 10-minute lean test recommended
- [Long COVID symptom burden study findings](#)
- Overlap with dysfunctional breathing
- Associated sleep disturbance and fatigue
- Invisible!!
- Medium to long term prognosis not well understood (Kwan 2022)
- Need for reliable biomarkers



# POTS management

- Fluids (2-3L/day) – urine colour test
- Salt (3-10g/day) from salt tablets, table salt, electrolytes etc
- Compression - 20-30mmHg of pressure; research shows garments for thighs, buttocks and abdomen most effective
- Avoidance of prolonged standing, bending, heat
- Modify food consumption (small meals frequently)
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Elevate head of bed (avoid horizontal position)
- Physical manoeuvres to counter symptoms (leg crossing, calf contractions)
- Graduated exercise
- Consider exacerbating factors
- Screen for associated hyperventilation syndrome, anxiety, dietary restrictions, sleep disturbance

 Infection. Prevention. Control. You're in safe hands



## Are you drinking enough?

Colours 1-3 suggest normal urine

1		Check the colour of your urine against this colour chart to see if you're drinking enough fluids throughout the day.
2		
3		If your urine matches 1-3, then you're hydrated.

Colours 4-8 suggest you need to rehydrate

4		If your urine matches 4-8, then you're dehydrated and you need to drink more.
5		
6		If you have blood in your urine (red or dark brown), seek advice from your GP.
7		
8		Please be aware that certain foods, medications and vitamin supplements can change the colour of urine.

Community Infection Prevention and Control, Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust  
[www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk) September 2018

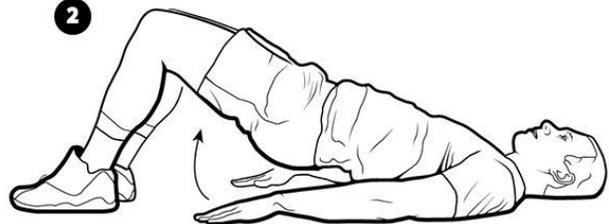
## Bridging Exercise

1

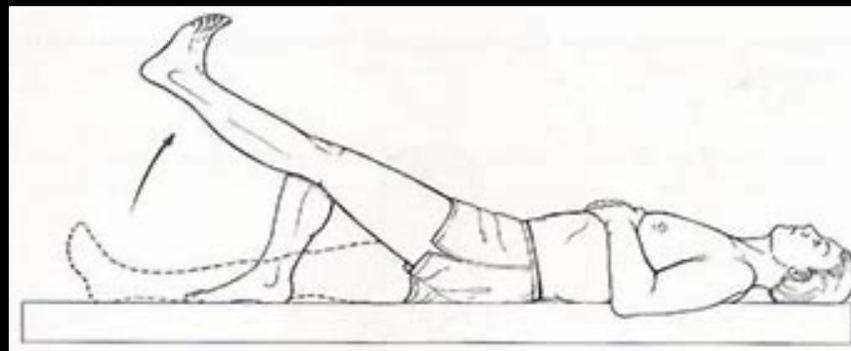
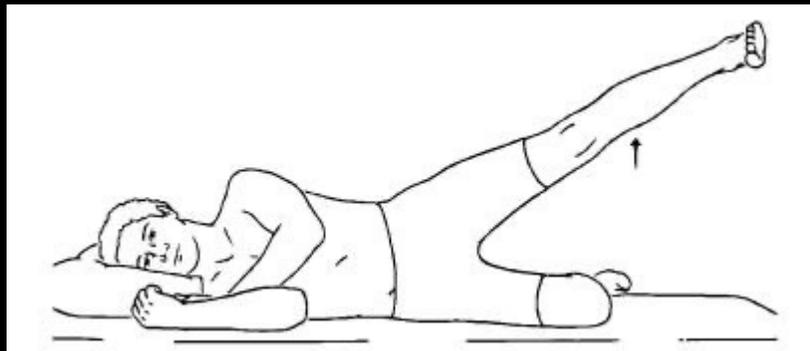


Lie flat on back with knees bent, feet planted flat on the floor.

2



Tighten abdominal and buttock muscles and lift buttocks off the floor (repeat).



# POTS: a patient's perspective

- Gaslighting
- Going crazy
- Debilitating
- Frustrating
- Loss of self
- Slow improvement
- Recovery not linear



Source: [220\\_F\\_321664166\\_QYBoJbR2kH4aFxBx1dPubyES655mKu0b.jpg \(220x147\) \(ftcdn.net\)](#)

# What employers need to know

- **Things to avoid:**
  - lifting heavy objects
  - arm elevation (such as overhead lifting)
  - prolonged postures (standing – provide seating)
  - stair climbing (use lifts)
  - heat
  - overstimulating environments
  - stress
  - dehydration
- **Other considerations:**
  - fatigue (stop, rest, pace)
  - poor sleep (avoidance of shift work; regular hours)





## Recommendations at work

---

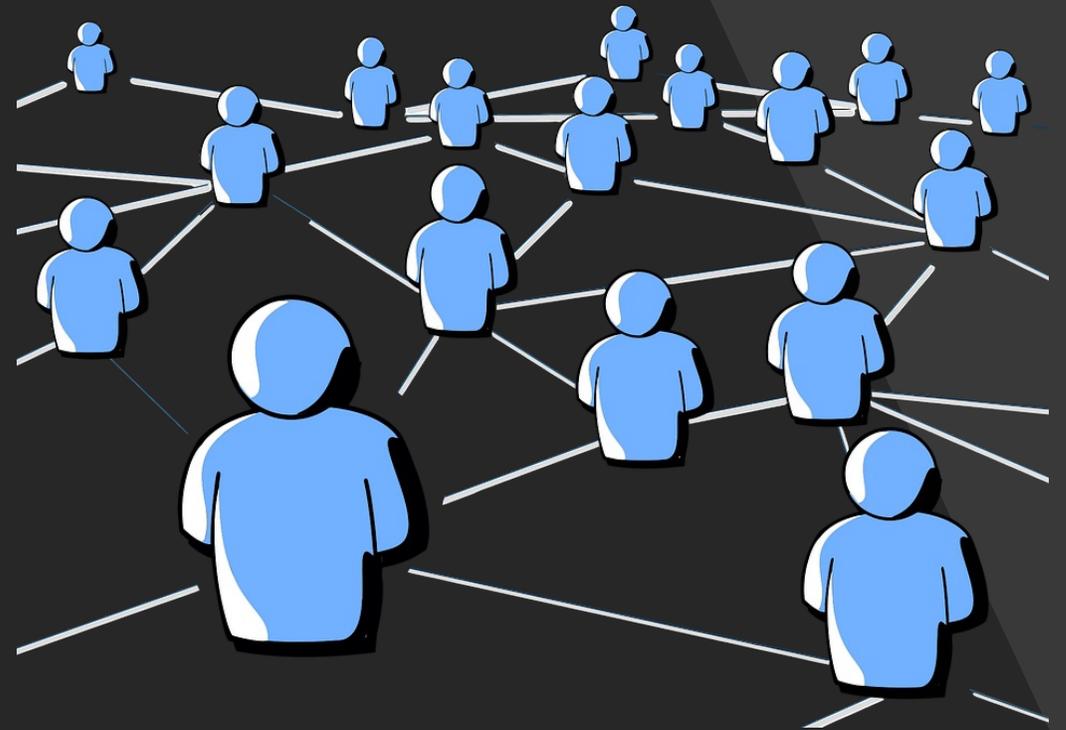
- Work from home options/flexible working arrangements (in terms of location and time)
- Car park close by
- Time off for treatment
- Reduce environmental stimulation – noise, lighting, screen time
- Modification of work tasks/ergonomic design



**NO PARKING  
IN THIS AREA**

# Recommendations at work (cont.)

- Temperature controlled workspace
- Regular work breaks
- Dress code (compression)
- Recognise the self-worth and social connection work provides – most people want to continue work in some capacity
- Involve skilled professionals in the management of symptoms: physiotherapy and occupational therapy; some may need cardiologist review



# Resources and support

- [Employment and POTS | Standing Up To POTS](#)
- [Dysautonomia International: Dysautonomia Awareness, Dysautonomia Advocacy, Dysautonomia Advancement](#)
- [Dysautonomia Support Network - Live Your Best Life](#)
- [POTS What To Avoid - POTS - Dysautonomia Information Network \(DINET\)](#)
- **CHOP Modified Exercise Program for POTS: [Microsoft Word - CHOP Modified Dallas POTS Exercise Program.docx](#) ([standinguptopots.org](http://standinguptopots.org))**
- The 2021 POTS Expert Consensus Review ([Vernino et al., 2021](#))
- [Complex Chronic Illness Support | Empowering People Towards Wellness](#) ([ccisupport.org.nz](http://ccisupport.org.nz))