

Product review

Kegel8 Ultra 20 Electronic Pelvic Toner

Savantini Limited, Hull, UK, £133.32 for UK residents who qualify for VAT exemption (add £26.67 if purchasing from abroad)
www.kegel8.co.uk



Neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES) enhances muscular activation in weak or poorly innervated muscle groups (Savage 2019). The use of NMES on the pelvic floor muscles (PFMs) is generally accepted in the treatment of: patients who are graded as either 0–2 on the Modified Oxford Scale; or those who are found to be stronger than grade 2, but lacking type 2 endurance muscle fibres. It is best practice to employ NMES in combination with supervised PFM exercises (PFMEs) under the supervision of a clinical specialist in pelvic floor physiotherapy.

The Kegel8 Ultra 20 Electronic Pelvic Toner comes with a carrying case, a *Quick Start Guide*,

a Kegel8 probe, electrode pads and a 9-V battery. The manual is user-friendly, and explains 20 different preset programmes that specifically address the following issues:

- bladder weakness and incontinence;
- pelvic organ prolapse;
- reduced sexual sensation;
- pain relief; and
- PFMEs (strengthening and relaxation).

There are also three programmes that can be customized by a therapist. I found this to be beneficial because I always personalize my patients' NMES programmes in order to ensure that they are being worked to the limits of their individual levels of endurance.

The uniqueness of the Kegel8 Ultra 20 is that it is essentially a two-in-one device. Vaginal treatment can be delivered by employing the probe, and the electrodes can be used for both pain management and posterior percutaneous tibial nerve stimulation (PTNS) (see Fig. 1). All treatments are linked to specific programmes for ease of use.

This device may be worth considering when a two-in-one treatment approach is required (e.g. PTNS in conjunction NMES). For example, it could be recommended to a patient who has bladder overactivity with symptoms such as frequency and urgency, and also a weak or absent PFM contraction.

The *Quick Start Guide* is very easy to understand, and provides comprehensive information about what each programme does and which symptoms can be treated. The manual also suggests how programmes can be progressed, and which should be employed as “maintenance” for optimum self-management.

Two of the programmes are recommended for the treatment of bowel incontinence, and

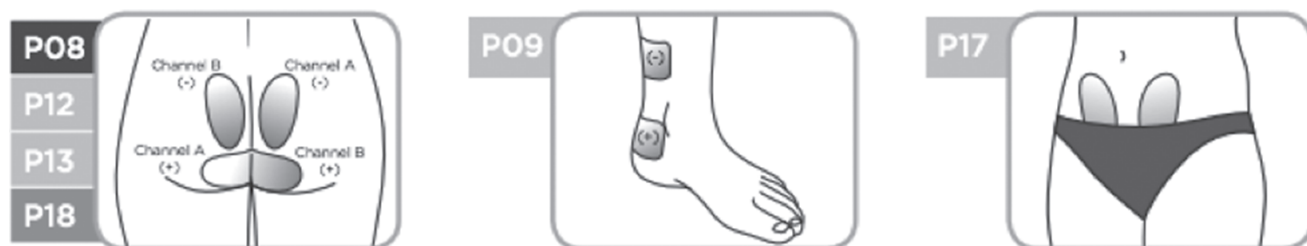


Figure 1. Manufacturer's guide to applying Kegel8 Ultra 20 electrode pads.

the instructions encourage the use of the vaginal probe. As a clinician, I would argue that, if someone were to use NMES for faecal incontinence, then it would be more appropriate to employ a specific probe for this, such as the Neen Anuform (Performance Health International Ltd, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, UK). I wonder whether the manufacturer has recommended the use of the vaginal probe because this will be cheaper: the cost of purchasing a Neen Anuform would add another £34.99 to the price. However, it is important to note that the Neen Anuform is compatible with the Kegel8 Ultra 20, and I do use this combination in clinical practice myself.

Although there is a “pelvic floor relaxation” programme with a frequency of 2 Hz, I would be cautious about recommending NMES for this purpose. However, that being said, if you treat patients who require higher levels of stimulation intensity before they feel any sensation, this may be something that you could consider using as a cool-down exercise.

In summary, the Kegel8 Ultra 20 is at least £40 more expensive than its well-known competitors (Savage 2019), i.e. the Neen Pericalm Pelvic Floor Stimulator and the NeuroTrac Pelvitone (de Smit Medical Systems Ltd, Bristol, UK). If you have a patient whom you feel may benefit from both NMES and PTNS, then it may be a cost-effective option. However, if you are looking for a NMES device for your patients to loan, then I believe that you can get a unit with the same functionality for a more-affordable price.

Rosie Conway

Clinical Specialist Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist

Roseanna Grace Physiotherapy

Newcastle upon Tyne

UK

Reference

- Savage A. M. (2019) Neuromuscular electrical stimulation devices. *Journal of Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy* **125** (Autumn), 16–26.