

Dilation Assistance

1. Relaxation, Breathing and Visualization

Create a safe, calm and relaxing environment to dilate

Reduce stress and tension going into dilation by practicing breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing 5-10 minutes

Helps quiet our minds and allows the muscles of the body, like the pelvic floor, to relax. Stimulates a “rest and digest” response and keeps our bodies in a state of safety which helps reduce pain.

Before dilating

- Lie comfortably on your back
- Option to put pillows under your knees
- Place your hands on your lower abdomen
- Relax your tongue
- Take a long slow inhale through your nose
- Notice your rib cage open and your belly rise into your hands
- Relax your jaw, neck and shoulders
- Effortlessly exhale through your mouth
- Inhale calm, exhale tension



Reverse Kegel

Being able to consciously release your pelvic floor will significantly improve the ease of dilation. The feeling of lengthening your pelvic floor is similar to the feeling of letting go when you urinate. When you inhale, your pelvic floor has a tendency to release to make room for the breath. So, as you practice diaphragmatic breathing, try to feel the relaxation of your pelvic floor on the inhalation. Visualisation can also be helpful with this.

Visualization

As you inhale, send your breath into your pelvis and try imagining:

- A flower blooming, petal by petal as your muscles let go
- A balloon inflating gently into your underwear
- The space between your vagina and your anus lengthening ever so slightly

Using tools for meditation or relaxation such as a guided meditation or listening to relaxing music are very helpful. There is even a dilation meditation available at:

<https://yourpaceyoga.com>

2. Exercises

a. Child's Pose

Start on your hands and knees. Let your hips come down to your heels. You can place your hands on your sitz bones and breathe into your pelvic floor. Imagine that as you inhale that your sitz bones are gently moving away from each other. Hold anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes.



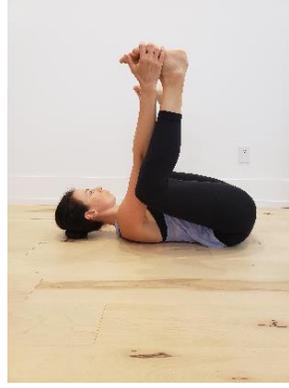
b. Cat-Cow

Start on all fours, place your hands under your shoulders, and your knees under your hips. Inhale as you drop your belly towards the floor, gently look upwards and imagine your pelvic floor opening. Exhale as you round your back like an angry cat, tuck your tailbone in and look downwards. Repeat 10 times.

c. Hip circles in 4-point kneeling

In 4-point kneeling, imagine you have a marker sticking out from between your bum cheeks. As you continue to breathe normally, imagine you are drawing a circle on the wall behind you with that marker. Start with small circles, slowly making them bigger, once your circles are as big as they can comfortably be, start drawing them in the opposite direction, gradually making the circles smaller and smaller. Repeat 10 times.



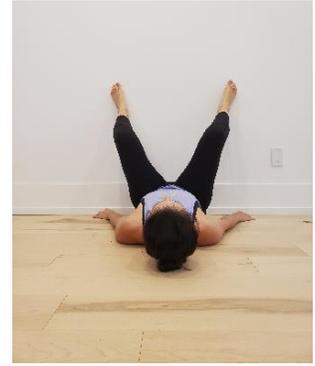
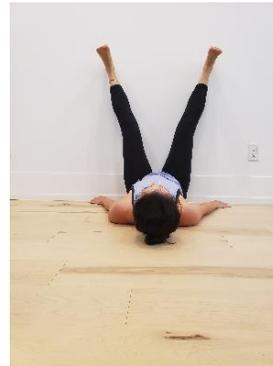


d. Happy Baby Pose

Lie on your back on your bed or on the floor. Start with hugging your knees to your chest, letting your knees open to either side of your abdomen and rib cage. If it is comfortable, you can hold the outside edges of your feet or hold your big toes on each foot with your index and middle finger. Breathe into your pelvic floor. Hold anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes.

e. Legs up the wall

Lying on the ground perpendicular to an unobstructed wall, slowly bring your bum closer to the wall, bring your legs up to rest on the wall. Practice breathing deeply into your pelvis and lower abdomen. This position can be modified by placing a bolster or cushion under your hips, or by staying slightly away from the wall, and planting your feet on the wall with your knees bent. Hold anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes.



***** You can modify the exercises to make them more comfortable by using pillows, blankets or a yoga mat under your head, knees, hips etc.**

3. Lubricant

Lubricant is an important part of dilation. We recommend a water based lubricant because the surgical dilators can be damaged by a silicone lubricant. There are countless lubricants with variable price points, we recommend finding a lubricant you can afford that works well for you.

Ideally, we suggest a lubricant that isn't too concentrated (that has an **Osmolality <1200 mOsm**) and that has a **pH around 6 (between 5-7)**. Most lubricants do not list this information on the packaging and may require some internet research to find it.

Remember, find a lubricant that is affordable to you and works well for you so you can use as much as you need.

Some people report using a "lube launcher" is helpful to more evenly spread the lubricant throughout the vaginal cavity and get better coverage of the dilator. These can be ordered online.

