

[M]OTHERBOARD RESOURCES

THE BIG STRETCH



[m]otherboard
birth preferences made simple



PERINEAL MASSAGE ALTERNATIVE

from a Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist



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Many people worry about tearing during birth. Perineal Massage is a technique to get you comfortable with the idea of your body stretching, softening, and open to let your baby be born earthside.

HELP YOUR PELVIC FLOOR LEARN HOW TO STRETCH

Get into a comfortable position such as leaning up against the headboard of your bed with your knees slightly bent out to the side. You can also situate yourself in the bathtub, on the toilet, or in the shower, anywhere you can comfortably massage your pelvic floor.

If you were to think of your vaginal opening as a clock face (with the clock facing out between your legs) your pelvic floor muscles run from 3 o'clock (on the right side) to 9 o'clock (on your left side). I find using my thumbs allows for greater ease and access to working with the tissues, but you could also try your index finger.

Insert the tip of your thumb into your vagina and place it at 6 o'clock. You are on the perineal body the area between your vaginal and anal opening. If you previously tore during childbirth, this area may feel restricted to downward pressure.

Try pushing down on the perineal body and see if it can move easily. If it doesn't, apply a gentle pressure and hold until you feel the tissues release. You may want to try to insert two fingers, index and middle fingers work great or two thumbs, just into your opening and work to try spreading the tissues out to the side, kind of like ironing the tissues flat. This is the motion of expansion that needs to happen for intercourse and childbirth.



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If you move your thumb in past the first knuckle you will be on your rectum. Don't push here as it may feel uncomfortable. Slide off the rectum to the side at either 5 or 7 o'clock depending on which thumb you are using. Using your left thumb press into the tissues from 9 to 7 o'clock. Use your right thumb to check the tissues from 3 to 5 o'clock and see if both sides spring and move equally. Normal tissue has a nice bounce to it, like pushing down on a trampoline. A knot in the tissue will feel hard and have less mobility.

When you encounter a hard area, allow your thumb to sink into the tissue. You are not pushing your thumb in, but are inviting yourself into the tissues, not forcing your way in with pushing. Allow it to sink into the tissue until it can't sink in any further and just hold it there.

As you hold it there, you are waiting for it to release or "melt" under your finger. Bringing your awareness and breathe down to the area can also help it to melt or release. You can try placing your other hand either on your pubic bone (the pelvic bone in front), your tailbone, or on the same side ischium (your sit bone).

Visualize a connection between your two hands and see if the placement of your other hand helps the tissue under your thumb relax. Your goal is to get the harder side tissue to feel the same as the softer side. You can also try to massage the pelvic floor muscles between your thumb on the inside and your fingers on the outside. Sometime offering compression between your thumb and fingers can help the tissues to relax.

Make a mental note of which side tends to hold more tension and check back in frequently to see if the tension is always there or fluctuates with time and even side to side. Tension in different areas of the pelvis means different things for how you are showing up in your life and what you are blocking. Having greater understanding of this area and how your energy flows in your pelvis can really help you manifest your desires and good in a healthy balanced way with ease and flow.

To learn how to stop pushing and forcing things in your life and to increase your ability to receive visit www.instituteforbirthhealing.com

